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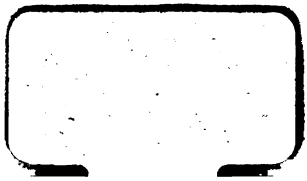

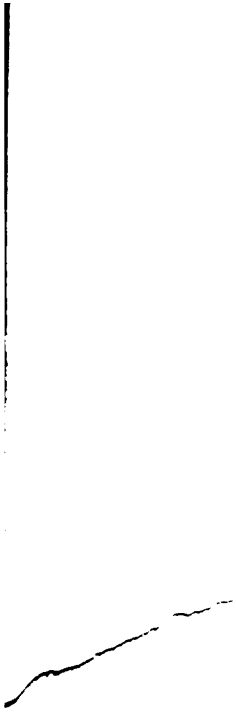

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MISCELLANEOUS PROSE WORKS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

VOL. IX.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO., PAUL'S WORK.

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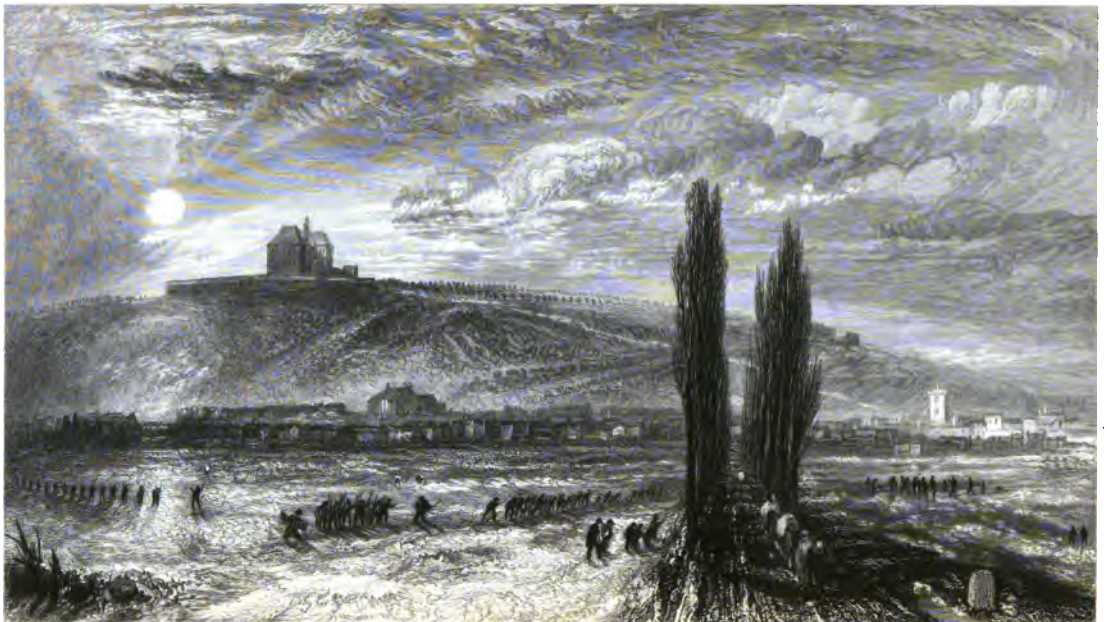

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THE

PROSE WORKS

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SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

VOL. 9.

J. M. W. Turner R.A

NAPOLEON'S *Logement* QUAI CONTI.

EDINBURGH PUBLISHED 1834 BY ROBERT CADELL

LIFE

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE,

WITH A

PRELIMINARY VIEW OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

VOL. II.

ROBERT CADELL, EDINBURGH;

WHITTAKER AND CO., LONDON.

1835.

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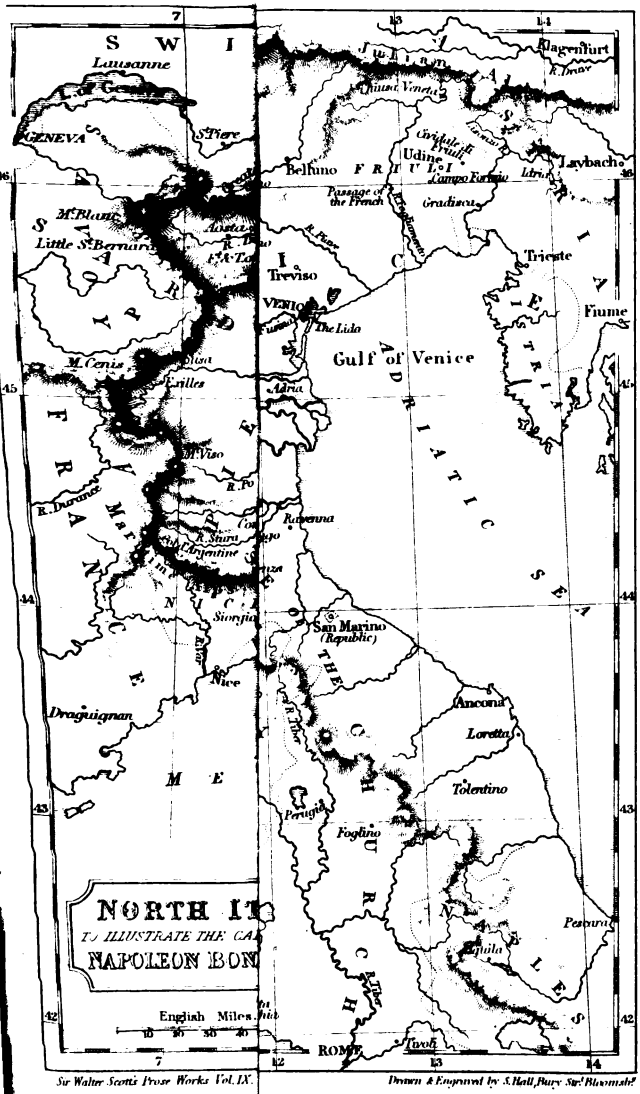
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R. Po
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Ancona
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Foligno
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Aquila
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ROME
San Marino (Republic)
Gulf of Venice
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R. Guadiana
R. Tinto
R. Odiel

LIFE

OF

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

CHAPTER XII.

VIEW OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (CONTINUED).

Jacobins determine upon the Execution of Louis.—Progress and Reasons of the King's Unpopularity.—Girondists taken by surprise, by a proposal for the Abolition of Royalty made by the Jacobins. — Proposal carried. — Thoughts on the New System of Government— Compared with that of Rome, Greece, America, and other Republican States.—Enthusiasm throughout France at the Change —Follies it gave birth to—And Crimes.—Monuments of Art destroyed.—Madame Roland interposes to save the Life of the King.—Barrère.—Girondists move for a Departmental Legion—Carried—Revoked—and Girondists defeated.—The Authority of the Community of Paris paramount even over the Convention.—Documents of the Iron-Chest.— Parallel betwixt Charles I. and Louis XVI.—Motion by Pétion, that the King should be Tried before the Convention.

It is generally to be remarked, that Crime, as well as Religion, has her sacramental associations, fitted for the purposes to which she desires to pledge her votaries. When Catiline imposed an

oath on his fellow-conspirators, a slave was murdered, and his blood mingled with the beverage in which they pledged each other to their treason against the republic. The most desperate mutineers and pirates too have believed, that by engaging their associates in some crime of a deep and atrocious nature, so contrary to the ordinary feelings of humanity as to strike with horror all who should hear of it, they made their allegiance more completely their own; and, as remorse is useless where retreat is impossible, that they thus rendered them in future the desperate and unscrupulous tools, necessary for the designs of their leaders.

In like manner, the Jacobins,—who had now full possession of the passions and confidence of the lower orders in France, as well as of all those spirits among the higher classes, who, whether desirous of promotion by exertions in the revolutionary path, or whether enthusiasts whose imagination had become heated with the extravagant doctrines that had been current during these feverish times,—the Jacobins resolved to engage their adherents, and all whom they influenced, in proceeding to the death of the unfortunate Louis. They had no reason to doubt that they might excite the populace to desire and demand that final sacrifice, and to consider the moment of its being offered as a time of jubilee. Nor were the better classes likely to take a warm or decisive interest in the fate of their unhappy prince, so long the object of unpopularity.

From the beginning of the Revolution, down to the total overthrow of the throne, first the power of the King, and afterwards his person and

the measures to which he resorted, were the constant subject of attack by the parties who successively forced themselves into his administration. Each faction accused the other during the time of their brief sway, of attempts to extend the power and the privileges of the crown; which was thus under a perpetual siege, though carried on by distinct and opposite factions, one of whom regularly occupied the lines of attack, to dislodge the others, as fast as they obtained successively possession of the ministry. Thus the Third Estate overcame the two privileged classes, in behalf of the people and against the crown; La Fayette and the Constitutionalists triumphed over the Moderates, who desired to afford the King the shelter and bulwark of an intermediate senate; and then, after creating a constitution as democratical as it could be, leaving a name and semblance of royalty, they sunk under the Girondists, who were disposed altogether to dispense with that symbol. In this way it appeared to the people, that the King was their natural enemy, and that the royal interest was directly opposed to a revolution which had brought them sundry advantages, besides giving them the feelings and consequence of freemen. In this manner, one of the mildest and best disposed monarchs that ever swayed a sceptre, became exposed to general suspicion and misconstruction in his measures, and (as is sure speedily to follow) to personal contempt, and even hatred. Whatever the King did in compliance with the current tide of revolution was accounted as fraudful complaisance, designed to blind the nation. Whatever opposition he made to that

powerful impulse, was accounted an act of open treason against the sovereignty of the people.

His position, with regard to the invading powers, was enough of itself to load him with obloquy and suspicion. It is true, that he was called, and professed himself, the willing king of a popular, or democratic monarchy; but in the proclamations of his allies, he was described as a monarch imprisoned, degraded, and almost dethroned. To achieve his liberty (as they affirmed), and to reestablish his rights, the Emperor his brother-in-law, the King of Prussia his ally, and above all, his brothers, the princes of the blood of France, were in arms, and had sent numerous armies to the frontiers.[1] It was scarcely possible, in the utmost extent of candour, that the French people should give Louis credit for desiring the success of the revolutionary cause, by which not only his power had been circumscribed, but his person had been placed under virtual restraint, against forces armed avowedly for his safety and liberty, as well as the restoration of his power. We can allow as much to the disinterestedness of Louis, as to any whose feelings and rights were immediately concerned with the point at issue; and we admit that all concessions which he made to the popular cause, before the National Assembly had asserted a paramount authority over his, were willingly and freely granted. But, after the march from Versailles, he must have been an enthusiast for public liberty of a very uncommon character, if we could suppose him seriously wishing the defeat of his brothers and allies, and the

[1] [Annual Register, v. xxxiv. pp. 230, 236.]

victory of those who had deprived him first of authority, and then of freedom.

A single glance at his situation must have convinced the people of France, that Louis could scarcely be sincere in desiring the continuance of the system to which he had given his adhesion as sovereign; and the consciousness that they could not expect confidence where they themselves had made ungenerous use of their power, added force to their suspicions, and acrimony to the deep resentments which arose out of them. The people had identified themselves and their dearest interests (right or wrong, it signifies little to the result) with the Revolution, and with the increasing freedom which it bestowed, or rather promised to bestow, in every succeeding change. The King, who had been the regular opponent of every one of these innovations, was in consequence regarded as the natural enemy of the country, who, if he continued to remain at the helm of the executive government, did so with the sole view of running the vessel upon the rocks.

If there had been any men in France generous enough to give the King credit for complete good faith with the Constitutionalists, his flight from Paris, and the manifestoes which he left behind him, protesting against the measures in which he had acquiesced, as extorted from him by constraint, gave open proof of Louis's real feelings. It is true, the King denied any purpose of leaving the kingdom, or throwing himself into the hands of the foreign powers; but it could escape no one, that such a step, however little it was calculated upon

in the commencement of his flight, might very easily have become inevitable before its completion. It does not appear from the behaviour of the escorts of dragoons and hussars, that there was any attachment among the troops to the King's person; and had the mutiny of Bouillé's forces against that general's authority taken place after the King reached the camp, the only safety of Louis must have been in a retreat into the Austrian territory. This chance was so evident, that Bouillé himself had provided for it, by requesting that the Austrian forces might be so disposed as to afford the King protection should the emergency occur.[1] Whatever, therefore, might be the King's first experiment, the point to which he directed his flight bore out those, who supposed and asserted that it must have ultimately terminated in his reunion with his brothers; and that such a conclusion must have repeatedly occurred to the King's thoughts.

But if the King was doubted and suspected before he gave this decisive proof of his disinclination to the constitution, there had surely happened nothing in the course of his being seized at Varennes, or the circumstances of his reception at Paris, tending to reconcile him to the constitutional crown, which was a second time proffered him, and which he again, with all its duties and acts of self-denial, solemnly accepted.

We have before hinted, that the King's assuming of new the frail and barren sceptre, proffered to him under the most humiliating circumstances, was a

[1] [Bouillé's Memoirs, p. 250.]

piece of indifferent policy. There occurred almost no course of conduct by which, subjected as he was to general suspicion, he could show himself once more to his people in a clear and impartial point of view—each of his measures was sure to be the theme of the most malignant commentary. If his conduct assumed a popular aspect, it was accounted an act of princely hypocrisy; if it was like his opposition to the departmental army, it would have been held as intended to weaken the defence of the country; if it resembled his rejection of the decrees against the emigrants and refractory priests, then it might be urged as inferring a direct intention of bringing back the old despotic system.

In short, all confidence was lost between the sovereign and the people, from a concurrence of unhappy circumstances, in which it would certainly be unjust to cast the blame exclusively on either party, since there existed so many grounds for distrust and misunderstanding on both sides. The noble and generous confidence which Frenchmen had been wont to repose in the personal character of their monarch—a confidence, which the probity of no man could deserve more than that of Louis—was withered, root and branch; or those in whose breasts it still flourished were banished men, and had carried the Oriflamme, and the ancient spirit of French chivalry, into a camp not her own. The rest of the nation, a scattered and intimidated remnant of Royalists excepted, were Constitutionalists, who, friends rather to the crown than to the King as an individual, wished to preserve the form of government, but without either zeal or attachment

to Louis; or Girondists, who detested his office as Republicans; or Jacobins, who hated his person. Every one, therefore, assailed Louis; and it was held enrolling himself amongst aristocrats, the most avowed and hated enemies of the new order of things, if any one lifted a voice in his defence, or even apology.

To this the influence of the revolutionary clubs, amounting to so many thousands, and of the daily press, almost the only kind of literature which France had left, added the full tribute of calumny and inculpation. The Jacobins attacked the person of the King from the very commencement of the Revolution; for they desired that Louis should be destroyed, even when some amongst them were leagued for placing Orleans in his room. The Girondists, on the contrary, would have been well contented to spare the person of Louis; but they urged argument after argument in the journal which they directed, against the royal office. But upon the whole, the King, whether in his royal or personal character, had been so long and uniformly calumniated and misinterpreted, that through most parts of France he was esteemed the enemy whom the people had most to dread, and whom they were most interested to get rid of. In evidence of which it may be added, that during all successive changes of parties, for the next year or two, the charge of a disposition towards royalty was always made an aggravation of the accusations which the parties brought against each other, and was considered as so necessary an ingredient, that it was not omitted even when circumstances rendered it impossible.

Both parties in the Convention were thus prepared to acquire popularity, by gratifying the almost universal prejudices against monarchy, and against the King. The Girondists, constant to the Republican principles they entertained, had resolved to abolish the throne; but their audacious rivals were prepared to go a step beyond them, by gratifying the popular spirit of vengeance which their own calumnies had increased to such a pitch, by taking the life of the dethroned monarch. This was the great national crime which was to serve France for a republican baptism, and which, once committed, was to be regarded as an act of definitive and deadly adhesion to the cause of the Revolution. But not contented with taking measures for the death of the monarch, this desperate but active faction resolved to anticipate their rivals in the proposal for the abolition of royalty.

The Girondists, who counted much on the popularity which they were to attain by this favourite measure, were so far from fearing the anticipation of the Jacobins, that, under the idea of Orleans having some interest remaining with Danton and others, they rather expected some opposition on their part. But what was their surprise and mortification when, on the 21st September, Manuel[1]

[1] [Manuel was born at Montargis in 1751. On the trial of the King he voted for imprisonment and banishment in the event of peace. When the Queen's trial came on, he was summoned as a witness against her; but only expressed admiration of her fortitude, and regret for her misfortunes. In Nov. 1793, he was condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal, and executed. Among other works, Manuel published "Coup d'œil Philosophique sur le Règne de St Louis," "Voyages de

arose, and demanded that one of the first proposals submitted to the Convention should be the abolition of royalty! Ere the Girondists could recover from their surprise, Collot d'Herbois, a sorry comedian, who had been hissed from the stage, desired the motion to be instantly put to the vote. The Girondists, anticipated in their scheme, had no resource left but to be clamorous in applauding the motion, lest their hesitation should bring their republican zeal into question. Thus all they could do was but to save their credit with the popular party, at a time when they had expected to increase it to such a height. Their antagonists had been so alert as to steal the game out of their hands.[1]

The violence with which the various orators expressed themselves against monarchy of every complexion, and kings in general, was such as to show, either that they were in no state of mind composed enough to decide on a great national measure, or that the horrors of the massacres, scarce ten days remote, impressed on them the danger of being lukewarm in the cause of the sovereign people, who were not only judges without resort, but the prompt executioners of their own decrees.

The Abbé Grégoire declared, that the dynasties of kings were a race of devouring animals, who fed on the blood of the people; and that kings were in the moral order of things what monsters are in the physical—that courts were the arsenals of crimes, and the centre of corruption—and that

l'Opinion dans les Quatres Parties du Monde," and "Lettres sur la Révolution."]

[1] [Lacretelle, t. x. p. 12; Mignet, t. iii. p. 150.]

the history of princes was the martyrology of the people. Finally, that all the members of the Convention, being fully sensible of these self-evident truths, it was needless to delay, even for a moment, the vote of abolition, reserving it to more leisure to put their declaration into better form. Ducos[1] exclaimed, that the crimes of Louis alone formed a sufficient reason for the abolition of monarchy. The motion was received and passed unanimously; and each side of the hall, anxious to manifest their share in this great measure, echoed back to the other the new war-cry of "Vive la Republique!"[2] Thus fell, at the voice of a wretched player and cut-throat, backed by that of a renegade priest, the most ancient and most distinguished monarchy of Europe. A few remarks may be permitted upon the new government, the adoption of which had been welcomed with so much gratulation.

It has been said, that the government which is best administered is best. This maxim is true for the time, but for the time only; as good administration depends often on the life of individuals, or other circumstances in themselves mutable. One would rather incline to say, that the government is best calculated to produce the happiness of a nation, which is best adapted to the existing state of the country which it governs, and possesses, at the same time, such internal means of regeneration as may enable it to keep pace with the changes of circumstances, and accommodate itself to the unavoidable

[1] [Born at Bourdeaux in 1765. He voted for the death of the King—and was guillotined Oct. 1793.]

[2] [Lacretelle, t. x. p. 16.]

alterations which must occur in a progressive state of society. In this point of view, and even in the patriarchal circle, the most natural forms of government, in the early periods of society, are Monarchy, or a Republic. The father is head of his own family; the assembled council of the fathers governs the Republic; or the *patria potestas* of the whole state is bestowed upon some successful warrior or eminent legislator, who becomes king of the tribe. But a republic, in the literal acceptation, which supposes all the individuals subject to its government to be consulted in council upon all affairs of the public, cannot survive the most early period of existence. It is only to be found around the council-fire of a North American tribe of Indians; and even there, the old men forming a sort of senate, have already established a species of aristocracy. As society advances, and the little state extends itself, ordinary matters of government are confided to delegates, or exclusively grasped by some of the higher orders of the community. Rome, when she dismissed the Tarquins, the period to which the Girondists were fond of assimilating that of the French Revolution, had already a privileged body of patricians, the senate, from which were exclusively chosen the consuls; until at a later period, and at the expense of many feuds with the patricians, the plebeians succeeded in obtaining for their order many advantages. But the state of Rome was not more republican, in the proper sense, than before these concessions. The corporate citizens of Rome were indeed admitted into some of the privileges of the nobles; but the quantity of territory

and of population over which these citizens extended their dominion, was so great, that the rural and unrepresented part of the inhabitants quite outnumbered that of the citizens who voted in the Comitia, and constituted the source of authority. There was the whole body of slaves, who neither were nor could be represented, being considered by the law as no farther capable of political or legal rights, than a herd of so many cattle; and there were the numerous and extensive dominions, over which, under the name of auxiliaries, Rome exercised a right of absolute sovereignty. In fact, the so called democracy was rather an oligarchy, dispersed more widely than usual, and vesting the government of an immense empire in a certain limited number of the inhabitants of Rome called citizens, bearing a very small proportion in bulk to the gross number of the inhabitants. These privileged persons in some degree lived upon their votes;—the ambitious caressed them, fed them, caught their eyes with magnificent exhibitions, and their ears with extravagant eloquence, and by corrupting their principles, at last united the small class of privileged citizens themselves, under the very bondage in which they had long kept their extensive empire. There is no one period of the Roman republic, in which it can be said, considering the number of the persons governed relatively to those who had as citizens a share of that government by vote, or capacity of bearing office, that the people, as a whole, were fairly and fully represented.

All other republics of which we have any distinct account, including the celebrated states of Greece,

were of so small a size, that it was by no means difficult to consult the citizens to a considerable extent in the affairs of the state. Still this right of being consulted was retained among the *free* citizens of Greece. Slaves, who amounted to a very large proportion of the inhabitants, were never permitted any interference there, more than in Rome. Now, as it was by slaves that the coarser, more debasing, and more sordid parts of the labour of the community were performed, there were thus excluded from the privilege of citizens almost all those, who, by constant toil, and by the sordid character of the employments to which their fate condemned them, might be supposed incapable of exercising political rights with due feelings of reflection and of independence. It is not too much to say, in conclusion, that, excepting in the earliest stage of human society, there never existed a community in which was to be found that liberty and equality, which the French claimed for each individual in the whole extent of their empire.

Not only the difficulty or impossibility of assigning to every person in France an equal portion of political power, was one against which antiquity had never attempted to struggle, but the wealth and size of the late French empire were circumstances which experience induced wise statesmen to conclude against the favourable issue of the experiment. Those memorable republics, which Montesquieu eulogizes[1] as being formed upon *virtue*, as the leading principle, inhabited the modest and sequestered habitations where virtue is most often found.

[1] [Esprit des Lois, liv. iii. c. 9.]

In mountainous countries like those of the Swiss, where the inhabitants are nearly of the same rank, and not very much disproportioned in substance, and where they inhabit a small district or territory, a republic seems the most natural form of government. Nature has, to a certain extent, established an equality among the fathers of such a society, and there is no reason why policy should supplant it. In their public meetings, they come together upon the same general footing, and possess nearly the same opportunity of forming a judgment; and the affairs of such a state are too little complicated to require frequent or prolonged discussions. The same applies to small states, like Genoa, and some of the Dutch provinces, where the inequality of wealth, if it exists in some instances, is qualified by the consideration, that it is gained in the same honourable pursuit of mercantile traffic, where all fortunes are founded on the same commercial system, and where the chance that has made one man rich yesterday, may to-morrow depress him and raise another. Under such favourable circumstances, republics may exist long and happy, providing they can prevent luxury from working the secret dissolution of their moral principles, or the exterior force of more powerful neighbours from swallowing up their little community in the rage of conquest.

America must certainly be accounted a successful attempt to establish a republic on a much larger scale than those we have mentioned. But that great and flourishing empire consists, it must be remembered, of a federative union of many states, which, though extensive in territory, are comparatively

thin in occupants. There do not exist in America, in the same degree, those circumstances of a dense and degraded population, which occasion in the old nations of Europe such an infinite difference of knowledge and ignorance, of wealth the most exuberant, and indigence the most horrible. No man in America need be poor, if he has a hatchet and arms to use it. The wilderness is to him the same retreat which the world afforded to our first parents. His family, if he has one, is wealth; if he is unencumbered with wife or children, he is the more easily provided for. A man who wishes to make a large fortune, may be disappointed in America; but he who seeks, with a moderate degree of industry, only the wants which nature demands, is certain to find them. An immense proportion of the population of the United States consists of agriculturists, who live upon their own property, which is generally of moderate extent, and cultivate it by their own labour. Such a situation is peculiarly favourable to republican habits. The man who feels himself really independent,—and so must each American who can use a spade or an axe,—will please himself with the mere exertion of his free-will, and form a strong contrast to the hollowing, bawling, blustering rabble of a city, where a dram of liquor, or the money to buy a meal, is sure to purchase the acclamation of thousands, whose situation in the scale of society is too low to permit their thinking of their political right as a thing more valuable than to be bartered against the degree of advantage they may procure, or of a license which they may exercise, by placing it at the disposal of one candidate or another.

Above all, before considering the case of America as parallel with that of France, the statesmen of the latter country should have observed one grand and radical difference. In America, after the great change in their system had been effected by shaking off the sovereignty of the mother country, the states arranged their new government so as to make the least possible alteration in the habits of their people. They left to a future and more convenient opportunity, what farther innovation this great change might render necessary; being more desirous to fix the general outlines of a firm and orderly government, although containing some anomalies, than to cast all existing authorities loose, in order that they might produce a constitution more regular in theory, but far less likely to be put into effectual execution, than those old forms under which the people had grown up, and to which they were accustomed to render regular obedience. They abolished no nobility, for they had none in the colonies to abolish; but in fixing the basis of their constitution, they balanced the force and impulse of the representative body of the states by a Senate, designed to serve the purposes answered by the House of Lords in the British Constitution. The governors of the different states, also, in whose power the executive administration of each was reposed, continued to exercise the same duties as before, without much other change, than that they were named by their fellow-citizens, instead of being appointed by the sovereign of the mother country. The Congress exercised the rights which success had given them

over the loyalists, with as much temperance as could be expected after the rage of a civil war. Above all, the mass of the American population was in a sound healthy state, and well fitted to bear their share in the exercise of political rights. They were independent, as we have noticed, and had comparatively few instances amongst them of great wealth, contrasted with the most degrading indigence. They were deeply imbued with a sense of religion, and the morality which is its fruit. They had been brought up under a free government, and in the exercise of the rights of freemen; and their fancies were not liable to be excited, or their understandings made giddy, with a sudden elevation to privileges, the nature of which was unknown to them. The republic of America, moreover, did not consist of one huge and populous country, with an overgrown capital, where the legislative body, cooped up in its precincts like prisoners, were liable to be acted upon by the applauses or threats of a desperate rabble. Each state of America carries on its own immediate government, and enjoys unmolested the privilege of adopting such plans as are best suited to their own peculiar situation, without embarrassing themselves with that ideal uniformity, that universal equality of rights, which it was the vain object of the French Constituent Assembly to establish. The Americans know that the advantage of a constitution, like that of a garment, consists, neither in the peculiarity of the fashion, nor in the fineness of the texture, but in its being well adapted to the person who receives protection from it. In

short, the sagacity of Washington was not more apparent in his military exploits, than in the manly and wise pause which he made in the march of revolution, so soon as peace gave an opportunity to interrupt its impulse. To replace law and social order upon an established basis was as much the object of this great general, as it seems to have been that of the statesmen of Paris, civilians as they were, to protract a period of insurrection, murder, and revolutionary tyranny.

To such peculiarities and advantages as those we have above stated, France opposed a direct contrast. Not only was the exorbitant influence of such a capital as Paris a bar to the existence of that republican virtue which is the essence of a popular form of government, but there was nothing like fixed or settled principles in the minds of the people of France at large. Every thing had, within the last few years, been studiously and industriously altered, from the most solemn rites of the Church of Rome, to the most trifling article of dress; from the sacrament of the mass to the fashion of a shoe-tie. Religion was entirely out of the question, and the very slightest vestiges of an established church were about to be demolished. Republican virtue (with the exception of that of the soldiers, whose valour did honour to the name) consisted in wearing a coarse dress and foul linen, swearing the most vulgar oaths, obeying without scruple the most villanous mandates of the Jacobin Club, and assuming the title, manner, and sentiments of a real sans-culotte. The country was besides divided into an infinite variety of factions, and threatened with

the plague of civil war. The streets of the metropolis had been lately the scene of a desperate conflict, and yet more recently of a horrible massacre. On the frontiers, the country was pressed by armies of invaders. It was a crisis in which the Romans, with all their love of freedom, would have called in the assistance of a dictator; yet it was then, when, without regarding either the real wants of the country, or the temper of its inhabitants, France was erected into a republic, a species of government the most inconsistent with energetic, secret, and successful councils.

These considerations could not have escaped the Girondists. Neither could they be blind to the fact, that each republic, whatever its pretensions to freedom, has committed to some high officer of the state, under the name of doge, stadtholder, president, or other title, the custody of the executive power; from the obvious and undeniable principle, that, with safety to freedom, it cannot be lodged in the hands of the legislative body. But knowing this to be the case, they dared not even hint that such a separation of powers was indispensable, aware that their fierce enemies, the Jacobins, while they would have seized on the office without scruple, would, with the other hand, sign an accusation of leze-nation against them for proposing it. Thus crude, raw, and ill considered, did one of the most important changes that could be wrought upon a country, pass as hastily through this legislative body as the change of a decoration in the theatre.

The alteration was, notwithstanding, hailed by

the community at large, as the consummation of the high fortunes to which France was called. True, half Europe was in arms at her gates—but the nation who opposed their swords to them were become Republicans. True, the most frightful disorder had stalked abroad, in the shape of armed slaughter—it was but the effervescence and delirium of a republican consciousness of freedom. Peculation had crept into the finance, and theft had fingered the diamonds of the state[1]—but the name of a republic was of itself sufficient to restore to the blackest Jacobin of the gang, the moral virtues of a Cincinnatus. The mere word *Republic* was now the universal medicine for all evils which France could complain of, and its regenerating operations were looked for with as much faith and confidence, as if the salutary effects of the convocation of the estates of the kingdom, once worshipped as a panacea with similar expectations, had not deceived the hopes of the country.

Meantime, the actors in the new drama began to play the part of Romans with the most ludicrous solemnity. The name of *citizen* was now the universal salutation to all classes; even when a deputy spoke to a shoe-black, that fond symbol of equality was regularly exchanged betwixt them; and, in the ordinary intercourse of society, there was the most ludicrous affectation of republican

[1] ["One night the jewel-office, in the Tuileries, was pillaged, and all the splendid ornaments of the crown disappeared. The seals affixed on the locks were removed, but no marks of violence appeared on them, which showed that the abstraction was by order of the authorities, and not by popular violence."—THIERS, t. iii. p. 103.]

brevity and simplicity. "When thou conquerest Brussels," said Collot d'Herbois, the actor, to General Dumouriez, "my wife, who is in that city, has my permission to reward thee with a kiss." Three weeks afterwards the general took Brussels, but he was ungallant enough not to profit by this flattering permission.[1] His quick wit caught the ridicule of such an ejaculation as that which Camus addressed to him: "Citizen-general," said the deputy, "thou dost meditate the part of Cæsar; but remember I will be Brutus, and plunge a poniard in thy bosom."—"My dear Camus," said the lively soldier, who had been in worse dangers than were involved in this classical threat, "I am no more like Cæsar than you are like Brutus; and an assurance that I should live till you kill me, would be equal to a brevet of immortality."

With a similar assumption of republican dignity, men graced their children, baptized or unbaptized, with the formidable names of Roman heroes, and the folly of Anacharsis Clootz seemed to become general throughout the nation.

Republican virtues were of course adopted or affected. The duty of mothers nursing their own children, so eloquently insisted on by Rousseau,[2] and nevertheless so difficult to practise under the forms of modern life, was generally adopted in Paris; and as the ladies had no idea that this process of parental attention was to interfere with the usual round of entertainment, mothers, with their infants dressed in the most approved Roman cos-

[1] [Dumouriez, v. iii. p. 262; Journal des Jacobins, 14th Oct. 1792.]

[2] [Emile, liv. i.]

tume, were to be seen at the theatre, with the little disastrous victims of republican affectation, whose wailings, as well as other embarrassments occasioned by their presence, formed sometimes disagreeable interruptions to the amusements of the evening, and placed the inexperienced matrons in an awkward situation.

These were follies to be laughed at. But when men read Livy, for the sake of discovering what degree of private crime might be committed under the mask of public virtue, the affair became more serious. The deed of the younger Brutus served any man as an apology to betray to ruin and to death a friend, or a patron, whose patriotism might not be of the pitch which suited the time. Under the example of the elder Brutus, the nearest ties of blood were repeatedly made to give way before the ferocity of party zeal—a zeal too often assumed for the most infamous and selfish purposes. As some fanatics of yore studied the Old Testament for the purpose of finding examples of bad actions to vindicate those which themselves were tempted to commit, so the Republicans of France, we mean the desperate and outrageous bigots of the Revolution, read history, to justify, by classical instances, their public and private crimes. Informers, those scourges of a state, were encouraged to a degree scarce known in ancient Rome in the time of the emperors, though Tacitus has hurled his thunders against them, as the poison and pest of his time. The duty of lodging such informations was unblushingly urged as indispensable. The safety of the republic being the supreme charge of every

citizen, he was on no account to hesitate in *denouncing*, as it was termed, any one whomever, or however connected with him,—the friend of his counsels, or the wife of his bosom,—providing he had reason to suspect the devoted individual of the crime of *incivism*,—a crime the more mysteriously dreadful, that no one knew exactly its nature.

The virtue, even of comparatively good men, gave way under the temptations held out by these fearful innovations on the state of morals. The Girondists themselves did not scruple to avail themselves of the villany of others, when what they called the cause of the country, in reality that of their own faction, could be essentially served by it; but it was reserved for the Jacobins to carry to the most hideous extremity the principle which made an exclusive idol of patriotism, and demanded that every other virtue, as well as the most tender and honourable dictates of feeling and conscience, should be offered up at the shrine of the republic, as children were of old made to pass through the fire to Moloch.

Another eruption of republican zeal was directed against the antiquities, and fine arts of France. The name of king being pronounced detestable, all the remembrances of royalty were, on the motion of Barrère, ordered to be destroyed. This task was committed to the rabble; and although a work dishonourable to their employers, and highly detrimental both to history and the fine arts, it was nevertheless infinitely more harmless than those in which the same agents had been lately employed. The royal sepulchres at Saint Denis,

near Paris, the ancient cemetery of the Bourbons, the Valois, and all the long line of French monarchs, were not only defaced on the outside, but utterly broken down, the bodies exposed, the bones dispersed, and the poor remains, even of Henry IV. of Navarre, so long the idol of the French nation, exposed to the rude gaze, and irreverent grasp, of the banditti who committed the sacrilege.[1]

Le Noire, an artist, had the courage to interpose for preventing the total dispersion of the materials of those monuments, so valuable to history and to literature. He procured, with difficulty, permission to preserve and collect them in a house and garden in the *Rue des Petits Augustins*, where their mutilated remains continued in safety till after the restoration of the Bourbons. The

[1] [" The first vault opened was that of Turenne. The body was found dry like a mummy, the features perfectly resembling the portrait of this distinguished general. Relics were sought after with eagerness, and Camille Desmoulins cut off one of the little fingers. The body, at the intercession of M. Desfontaines, was removed to the Jardin des Plantes. The features of Henry the Fourth were also perfect. A soldier cut off a lock of the beard with his sabre, and putting it upon his upper lip, exclaimed, 'Et moi aussi, je suis soldat Français! désormais je n'aurai pas d'autre moustache!' The body was placed upright upon a stone for the rabble to divert themselves with it; and a woman, reproaching the dead Henry with the crime of having been a king, knocked down the corpse, by giving it a blow in the face. Two large pits had been dug in front of the north entrance of the church, and quick lime laid in them; into those pits the bodies were thrown promiscuously; the leaden coffins were then carried to a furnace, which had been erected in the cemetery, and cast into balls, destined to punish the enemies of the republic."— See Promenade aux Sépultures Royales de Saint Denis, par M. P. St A. G., and LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 264.]

enterprise was accomplished at much personal risk; for if the people he had to deal with had suspected that the zeal which he testified for the preservation of the monuments, was rather that of a royalist than of an antiquary, his idolatry would have been punished by instant death.

But the demolition of those ancient and sacred monuments was comparatively a trivial mode of showing hatred to royalty. The vengeance of the Republicans was directed against the emigrants, who, armed or unarmed, or from whatever cause they were absent from France, were now to be at once confounded in a general set of decrees. 1. All emigrants taken in arms were to suffer death within twenty-four hours. 2. Foreigners who had quitted the service of France since the 14th July, 1789, were, contrary to the law of nations, subjected to the same penalty. 3. All Frenchmen who had sought refuge in foreign parts, were banished for ever from their native country, without any distinction, or enquiry into the cause of their absence. The effects of these unfortunate exiles were already under sequestration, and by the assignats which were issued on the strength of this spoliation, Cambon, who managed the finances, carried on the war, and supplied the expenses of government.

The emigrants who had fled abroad, were not more severely treated than those supposed to share their sentiments who had remained at home. Persons suspected, from whatever cause, or denounced by private malice as disinclined to the new system, were piled anew into the prisons, which had been

emptied on the 2d and 3d of September, and where the blood of their predecessors in misfortune was yet visible on the walls. The refractory priests were particularly the objects of this species of oppression, and at length a summary decree was made for transporting them in the mass from the land of France to the unhealthy colony of Guiana, in South America. Many of these unfortunate men came to a more speedy fate.

But the most august victims destined to be sacrificed at the altar of republican virtue, were the royal family in the Temple, whose continuing in existence seemed, doubtless, to the leaders, a daily reproach to their procrastination, and an object to which, when the present spirit should abate, the affections of the bewildered people might return with a sort of re-action. The Jacobins resolved that Louis should die, were it only that the world might see they were not ashamed to attest, with a bloody seal, the truth of the accusations they had brought against him.

On the other hand, there was every reason to hope that the Girondists would exert, in protection of the unhappy prince, whatever vigour they derived from their predominating influence in the Convention. They were, most of them, men, whose philosophy, though it had driven them on wild political speculations, had not destroyed the sense of moral right and wrong, especially now that the struggle was ended betwixt monarchy and democracy, and the only question remaining concerned the use to be made of their victory. Although they had aided the attack on the Tuileries,

on the 10th of August, which they considered as a combat, their hands were unstained with the massacres of September, which, as we shall presently see, they urged as an atrocious crime against their rivals, the Jacobins. Besides, they had gained the prize, and were in possession of the government; and, like the Constitutionalists before them, the Girondists now desired that here, at length, the revolutionary career should terminate, and that the ordinary forms of law and justice should resume their usual channels through France; yielding to the people protection for life, personal liberty, and private property, and affording themselves, who held the reins of government, the means of guiding these honourably, safely, and with advantage to the community.

The philosophical statesmen, upon whom these considerations were not lost, felt nevertheless great embarrassment in the mode of interposing their protection in the King's favour. Their republicanism was the feature on which they most prided themselves. They delighted to claim the share in the downfall of Louis, which was due to their colleague Barbaroux, and the Federates of Marseilles and Brest. It was upon their accession to this deed that the Girondists rested their claims to popularity; and with what front could they now step forward the defenders, at the least the apologists, of the King whom they had aided to dethrone; or what advantages would not the Jacobins obtain over them, when they represented them to the people as lukewarm in their zeal, and as falling off from the popular cause, in order to preserve the

life of the dethroned tyrant? The Girondist ministers felt these embarrassments, and suffered themselves to be intimidated by them from making any open, manly, and direct interference in the King's cause.

A woman, and, although a woman, not the least distinguished among the Girondist party, had the courage to urge a decisive and vigorous defence of the unhappy prince, without having recourse to the veil of a selfish and insidious policy. This was the wife of Roland, one of the most remarkable women of her time. A worthless, at least a careless father, and the doating folly of her mother, had left her when young to pick out such an education as she could, among the indecencies and impieties of French philosophy. Yet, though her Memoirs afford revolting specimens of indelicacy, and exaggerated sentiments in politics, it cannot be denied that the tenor of her life was innocent and virtuous in practice, and her sentiments unperverted, when left to their natural course.[1] She saw the great question in its true and real position; she saw, that it was only by interposing themselves betwixt the legislative body of France and the

[1] ["To a very beautiful person, Madame Roland united great powers of intellect; her reputation stood very high, and her friends never spoke of her but with the most profound respect. In character she was a Cornelia; and had she been blessed with sons, would have educated them like the Gracchi. The simplicity of her dress did not detract from her natural grace and elegance, and though her pursuits were more adapted to the other sex, she adorned them with all the charms of her own. Her personal memoirs are admirable. They are an imitation of Rousseau's Confessions, and often not unworthy of the original." —DUMONT, p. 326.]

commission of a great crime, that the Girondists could either remain firm in the government, attract the confidence of honest men of any description, or have the least chance of putting a period to the anarchy which was devouring their country. "Save the life of Louis," she said;[1] "save him by an open and avowed defence. It is the only measure that can assure your safety—the only course which can fix the stamp of public virtue on your government." Those whom she addressed listened with admiration; but, like one who has rashly climbed to a height where his brain grows giddy, they felt their own situation too tottering to permit their reaching a willing hand to support another, who was in still more imminent peril.

Their condition was indeed precarious. A large party in the Convention avowedly supported them; and in "*the Plain*," as it was called, a position held by deputies affecting independence, both of the Girondists and the Jacobins, and therefore occupying the neutral ground betwixt them, sate a large number, who, from the timidity of temper which makes sheep and other weak animals herd together in numbers, had formed themselves into a faction, which could at any time cast decision into either scale which they favoured. But they exercised this power of inclining the balance, less with a view to carrying any political point, than with that of securing their own safety. In ordinary debates, they usually gave their votes to the ministers, both because they *were* ministers, and also because the

[1] [At the bar of the National Convention, Dec. 7, 1792.]

milder sentiments of the Girondists were more congenial to the feelings of men, who would gladly have seen peace and order restored. But then these timid members of the Plain also assiduously courted the Jacobins, avoided joining in any measure which should give them mortal offence, and purchased a sort of immunity from their revenge, by showing plainly that they deserved only contempt. In this neutral party the gleanings of the defeated factions of Moderates and of Constitutionalists were chiefly to be found; resigning themselves to the circumstances of the moment, consulting their own safety, as they gave their votes, and waiting, perhaps, till less disorderly days might restore to them the privilege of expressing their actual sentiments. The chief of these trucklers to fortune was Barrère, a man of wit and eloquence, prompt invention, supple opinions, and convenient conscience.[1] His terror of the Jacobins was great, and his mode of disarming their resentment, so far as he and the neutral party were concerned, was often very ingenious. When by argument or by eloquence the Girondists had obtained some triumph in the Assembly, which seemed to reduce their

[1] ["I used to meet Barrère at a table d'hôte. I considered him of a mild and amiable temper. He was very well-bred, and seemed to love the Revolution from a sentiment of benevolence. His association with Robespierre, and the court which he paid to the different parties he successively joined and afterwards deserted, were less the effect of an evil disposition, than of a timid and versatile character, and a conceit, which made it incumbent upon him to appear as a public man. His talents as an orator were by no means of the first order. He was afterwards surnamed the Anacreon of the guillotine; but when I knew him he was only the Anacreon of the Revolution, upon which, in his 'Point du Jour,' he wrote some very amorous strains."—DUMONT, p. 199.]

adversaries to despair, it was then Barrère, and the members of *the Plain*, threw themselves between the victors and vanquished, and, by some proposal of an insidious and neutralizing nature, prevented the completion of the conquest, and afforded a safe retreat to the defeated.

The majorities, therefore, which the Girondists obtained in the Assembly, being partly eked out by this heartless and fluctuating band of auxiliaries, could never be supposed to arm them with solid or effective authority. It was absolutely necessary that they should exhibit such a power of protecting themselves and those who should join them, as might plainly show that the force was on their side. This point once established, they might reckon Barrère and his party as faithful adherents. But while the Jacobins retained the power of surrounding the Convention at their pleasure with an insurrection of the suburbs, without the deputies possessing other means of defence than arose out of their inviolability, the adherence of those whose chief object in voting was to secure their personal safety, was neither to be hoped nor expected. The Girondists, therefore, looked anxiously round, to secure, if it were possible, the possession of such a force, to protect themselves and their timorous allies.

It has been thought, that a more active, more artful body of ministers, and who were better acquainted with the mode of carrying on revolutionary movements, might at this period have secured an important auxiliary, by detaching the formidable Danton from the ranks of the enemy, and receiving

him into their own. It must be observed, that the camp of the Jacobins contained three separate parties, led each by one of the triumvirs whom we have already described, and acting in concert, for the common purpose of propelling the Revolution by the same violent means which had begun it—of unsheathing the sword of terror, and making it pass for that of justice—and, in the name of liberty, of letting murder and spoil, under the protection of armed ruffians of the basest condition, continue to waste and ravage the departments of France. But, although agreed in this main object, the triumvirs were extremely suspicious of each other, and jealous of the rights each might claim in the spoil which they contemplated. Danton despised Robespierre for his cowardice, Robespierre feared the ferocious audacity of Danton; and with him to fear was to hate—and to hate was—when the hour arrived—to destroy. They differed in their ideas also of the mode of exercising their terrible system of government. Danton had often in his mouth the sentence of Machiavel, that when it becomes necessary to shed blood, a single great massacre has a more dreadful effect than a series of successive executions. Robespierre, on the contrary, preferred the latter process as the best way of sustaining the Reign of Terror. The appetite of Marat could not be satiated, but by combining both modes of murder. Both Danton and Robespierre kept aloof from the sanguinary Marat. This position of the chiefs of the Jacobins towards each other seemed to indicate, that one of the three at least might be detached from the rest, and might bring his ruffians

in opposition to those of his late comrades, in case of any attempt on the Assembly; and policy recommended Danton, not averse, it is said, to the alliance, as the most useful auxiliary.

Among the three monsters mentioned, Danton had that energy which the Girondists wanted, and was well acquainted with the secret movements of those insurrections to which they possessed no key. His vices of wrath, luxury, love of spoil, dreadful as they were, are attributes of mortal men;—the envy of Robespierre, and the instinctive bloodthirstiness of Marat, were the properties of fiends. Danton, like the huge serpent called the boa, might be approached with a degree of safety when gorged with prey—but the appetite of Marat for blood was like the horse-leech, which says, "Not enough"—and the slaughterous envy of Robespierre was like the gnawing worm that dieth not, and yields no interval of repose. In glutting Danton with spoil, and furnishing the means of indulging his luxury, the Girondists might have purchased his support; but nothing under the supreme rule in France would have gratified Robespierre; and an unlimited torrent of the blood of that unhappy country could alone have satiated Marat. If a colleague was to be chosen out of that detestable triumvirate, unquestionably Danton was to be considered as the most eligible.

On the other hand, men like Brissot, Vergniaud, and others, whose attachment to republicanism was mixed with a spirit of virtue and honour, might be well adverse to the idea of contaminating their party with such an auxiliary, intensely stained as

Danton was by his share in the massacres of September. They might well doubt, whether any physical force which his revolutionary skill, and the arms it could put in motion, might bring to their standard, would compensate for the moral horror with which the presence of such a grisly proselyte must strike all who had any sense of honour or justice. They, therefore, discouraged the advances of Danton, and resolved to comprise him with Marat and Robespierre in the impeachment against the Jacobin chiefs, which they designed to bring forward in the Assembly.

The most obvious means by which the Girondists could ascertain their safety, and the freedom of debate, was by levying a force from the several departments, each contributing its quota, to be called a Departmental Legion, which was to be armed and paid to act as a guard upon the National Convention. The subject was introduced by Roland, [Sept. 24,] in a report to the Assembly, and renewed on the next day by Kersaint, a spirited Girondist, who candidly declared the purpose of his motion: "It was time," he said, "that assassins and their prompters should see that the law had scaffolds."

The Girondists obtained, that a committee of six members should be named, to report on the state of the capital, on the encouragement afforded to massacre, and on the mode of forming a departmental force for the defence of the metropolis. The decree was carried for a moment; but, on the next day, the Jacobins demanded that it should be revoked, denying that there was any occasion for

such a defence to the Convention, and accusing the ministers of an intention to surround themselves with a force of armed satellites, in order to overawe the good city of Paris, and carry into effect their sacrilegious plan of dismembering France.[1] Rebecqui and Barbaroux replied to this charge by impeaching Robespierre, on their own testimony, of aspiring to the post of dictator. The debate became more tempestuous the more that the tribunes or galleries of the hall were filled with the violent followers of the Jacobin party, who shouted, cursed, and yelled, to back the exclamations and threats of their leaders in the Assembly. While the Girondists were exhausting themselves to find out terms of reproach for Marat, that prodigy stepped forth, and raised the disorder to the highest, by avowing himself the author and advocate for a dictatorship. The anger of the Convention seemed thoroughly awakened, and Vergniaud read to the deputies an extract from Marat's journal, in which, after demanding two hundred and sixty thousand heads, which was his usual stint, he abused the Convention in the grossest terms, and exhorted the people to ACT[2]—words, of which the import was by this time perfectly understood.

This passage excited general horror, and the victory for a moment seemed in the hands of the Girondists; but they did not pursue it with sufficient vigour. The meeting passed to the order of the day; and Marat, in ostentatious triumph, produced a pistol, with which he said he would have

[1] [Lacretelle, t. x. p. 41.]

[2] ["O! peuple babillard, si tu savais agir!"]

blown out his brains, had a decree of accusation been passed against him. The Girondists not only lost the advantage of discomfiting their enemies by the prosecution of one of their most noted leaders, but were compelled for the present to abandon their plan of a departmental guard, and resign themselves to the guardianship of the faithful citizens of Paris.[1]

This city of Paris was at the time under the power of the intrusive community, or Common Council, many of whom had forced themselves into office on the 10th of August. It was the first act of their administration to procure the assassination of Mandat, the commandant of the national guard; and their accompts, still extant, bear testimony, that it was by their instrumentality that the murderers of September were levied and paid. Trained Jacobins and pitiless ruffians themselves, this civic body had raised to be their agents and assistants an unusual number of municipal officers, who were at once their guards, their informers, their spies, their jailers, and their executioners. They had, besides, obtained a majority of the inhabitants in most of the sections, whose votes placed them and their agents in command of the national guard; and the pikemen of the suburbs were always ready to second their excellent community, even against the Convention itself, which, in point of freedom of action, or effective power, made a figure scarcely more respectable than that of the King after his return from Varennes.

Roland almost every day carried to the Conven-

[1] [Thiers t. iii. p. 170; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 23.]

tion his vain complaints, that the course of the law for which he was responsible, was daily crossed, thwarted, and impeded, by the proceedings of this usurping body. The considerable funds of the city itself, with those of its hospitals and other public establishments of every kind, were dilapidated by these revolutionary intruders, and applied to their own purposes. The minister at length, in a formal report to the Convention, inculpated the Commune in these and such like offences. In another part of the report, he intimated a plot of the Jacobins to assassinate the Girondists, possess themselves of the government by arms, and choose Robespierre dictator. Louvet denounced Robespierre as a traitor, and Barbaroux proposed a series of decrees; the first declaring the Convention free to leave any city, where they should be exposed to constraint and violence; the second resolving to form a conventional guard; the third declaring, that the Convention should form itself into a court of justice, for trial of state crimes; the fourth announcing, that in respect the sections of Paris had declared their sittings permanent, that resolution should be abrogated.

Instead of adopting the energetic measures proposed by Barbaroux, the Convention allowed Robespierre eight days for his defence against Louvet's accusation, and ordered to the bar, [Nov. 5,] ten members of the Community, from whom they were contented to accept such slight apologies, and evasive excuses, for their unauthorized interference with the power of the Convention, as these insolent demagogues condescended to offer.

The accusation of Robespierre though boldly urged by Louvet and Barbaroux, was also eluded, by passing to the order of the day; and thus the Convention showed plainly, that however courageous they had been against their monarch, they dared not protect the liberty which they boasted of, against the encroachment of fiercer demagogues than themselves.[1]

Barbaroux endeavoured to embolden the Assembly, by bringing once more from his native city a body of those fiery Marseillois, who had formed the vanguard of the mob on the 10th of August. He succeeded so far in his scheme, that a few scores of those Federates again appeared in Paris, where their altered demeanour excited surprise. Their songs were again chanted, their wild Moresco dances and gestures again surprised the Parisians; and the more, as in their choruses they imprecated vengeance on the Jacobins, called out for mercy to the "poor tyrant," so they termed the King, and shouted in the cause of peace, order, and the Convention.[2]

The citizens of Paris, who could not reconcile the songs and exclamations of the Marseillois with their appearance and character, concluded that a snare was laid for them, and abstained from uniting themselves with men, whose sincerity was so suspicious. The Marseillois themselves, discouraged with their cold reception, or not liking their

[1] [Mignet, t. i. p. 224; Thiers, t. iii. p. 213; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 54.]

[2] ["Point de procès au roi! épargnons le pauvre tyran!"—Lacretelle, t. x. p. 47.]

new trade of maintaining order so well as their old one of oversetting it, melted away by degrees, and were soon no more seen nor heard of. Some of the Breton Federates, kept in the interest of the Girondists, by their countrymen the deputies Kersaint and Kervclagan, remained still attached to the Convention, though their numbers were too few to afford them protection in any general danger.

If the Memoirs of Dumouriez are to be relied on, that active and intriguing general presented to the Girondists another resource, not free certainly from hazard or difficulty to the republican government, which was the idol of these theoretical statesmen, but affording, if his means had proved adequate to the execution of his plans, a certain bulwark against the encroachments of the hideous anarchy threatened by the Jacobin ascendency.

General Dumouriez was sufficiently hated by the Jacobins, notwithstanding the successes which he had gained on the part of France over foreign enemies, to induce him to feel the utmost desire of putting down their usurped power; but he was under the necessity of acting with great caution. The bad success of La Fayette, deserted by his army as soon as he attempted to lead them against Paris, was in itself discouraging; but Dumouriez was besides conscious that the Jacobin clubs, together with the commissioners of the Convention, with Danton at their head, had been actively engaged in disorganizing his army, and diminishing his influence over them. Thus circumstanced, he naturally resolved to avoid hazarding any violent measure without the support of the Convention, in

case of being deserted by his army. But he affirms, that he repeatedly informed the Girondists, then predominant in the Assembly, that if they could obtain a decree, but of four lines, authorizing such a measure, he was ready to march to Paris at the head of a chosen body of troops, who would have been willing to obey such a summons; and that he would by this means have placed the Convention in a situation, when they might have set the Jacobins and their insurrectionary forces at absolute defiance.[1]

Perhaps the Girondists entertained the fear, first, that Dumouriez's influence with his troops might prove as inefficient as that of La Fayette, and leave them to atone with their heads for such a measure attempted and unexecuted. Or, secondly, that if the manœuvre proved successful, they would be freed from fear of the Jacobins, only to be placed under the restraint of a military chief, whose mind was well understood to be in favour of monarchy of one kind or other. So that, conceiving they saw equal risk in the alternative, they preferred the hazard of seeing their fair and favourite vision of a republic overthrown by the pikes of the Jacobins, rather than by the bayonets of Dumouriez's army. They turned, therefore, a cold ear to the proposal, which afterwards they would gladly have accepted, when the general had no longer the power to carry it into execution.

Thus the factions, so intimately united for the destruction of royalty, could not, when that step

[1] [Dumouriez, v. iii. p. 273.]

was gained, combine for any other purpose save the great crime of murdering their deposed sovereign. Nay, while the Jacobins and Girondists seemed moving hand in hand to the ultimate completion of that joint undertaking, the union was only in outward appearance; for the Girondists, though apparently acting in concert with their stern rivals, were in fact dragged after them by compulsion, and played the part less of actors than subdued captives in this final triumph of democracy. They were fully persuaded of the King's innocence as a man, of his inviolability and exemption from criminal process as a constitutional authority. They were aware that the deed meditated would render France odious to all the other nations of Europe; and that the Jacobins, to whom war and confusion were natural elements, were desirous for that very reason to bring Louis to the scaffold. All this was plain to them, and yet their pride as philosophers made them ashamed to be thought capable of interesting themselves in the fate of a tyrant; and their desire of getting the French nation under their own exclusive government, induced them to consent to any thing rather than protect the obnoxious though innocent sovereign, at the hazard of losing their popularity, and forfeiting their dearly-won character of being true Republicans.

A committee of twenty-four persons had been appointed early in the session of the Convention, to enquire into, and report upon, the grounds for accusing Louis. Their report was brought up on the 1st of November, 1792, and a more loathsome tissue of confusion and falsehood never was laid

upon the table of such an assembly. All acts that had been done by the Ministers in every department, which could be twisted into such a shape as the times called criminal, were charged as deeds, for which the sovereign was himself responsible; and the burden of the whole was to accuse the King, when he had scarcely a single regiment of guards even at his nominal disposal, of nourishing the intention of massacring the Convention, defended by thirty thousand national guards, besides the federates, and the militia of the suburbs.[1]

The Convention were rather ashamed of this report, and would scarce permit it to be printed. So soon as it appeared, two or three persons, who were therein mentioned as accomplices of particular acts charged against the King, contradicted the report upon their oath.[2] An additional charge was brought under the following mysterious circumstances:—Gamin, a locksmith of Versailles, communicated to Roland, about the latter end of December, that, in the beginning of May, 1792, he had been employed by the King to secrete an iron chest, or cabinet, in the wall of a certain apartment in the Tuileries, which he disclosed to the ministers of justice. He added a circumstance which throws discredit on his whole story, namely, that the King gave him with his own hand a glass of wine, after taking which he was seized with a cholic, followed

[1] [Mignet, t. i. p. 228.]

[2] M. de Septueil, in particular, quoted as being the agent by whom Louis XVI. was said to have transmitted money to his brothers when in exile, positively denied the fact, and made affidavit accordingly.

by a kind of paralysis, which deprived him for *fourteen* months of the use of his limbs, and the power of working for his bread. The inference of the wretch was, that the King had attempted to poison him; which those may believe who can number fourteen months betwixt the beginning of May and the end of December in the same year. This gross falsehood utterly destroys Gamin's evidence; and as the King always denied his knowledge of the existence of such a chest with such papers, we are reduced to suppose, either that Gamin had been employed by one of the royal ministers, and had brought the King personally into the tale for the greater grace of his story, or that the papers found in some other place of safety had been selected, and put into the chest by the Jacobin commissioners, then employed in surveying and searching the palace, with the purpose of trumping up evidence against the King.

Roland acted very imprudently in examining the contents of the chest alone and without witness, instead of calling in the commissioners aforesaid, who were in the palace at the time. This was perhaps done with the object of putting aside such papers as might, in that hour of fear and uncertainty, have brought into danger some of his own party or friends. One of importance, however, was found, which the Jacobins turned into an implement against the Girondists. It was an overture from that party addressed to Louis XVI., shortly before the 10th of August, engaging to oppose the motion for his forfeiture, providing Louis would recall to

his councils the three discarded ministers of their faction.

The contents of the chest were of a very miscellaneous nature. The documents consisted of letters, memorials, and plans, from different persons, and at different dates, offering advice, or tendering support to the King, and proposing plans for the freedom of his person. The Royalist project of Mirabeau, in his latter days, was found amongst the rest; in consequence of which his body was dragged out of the Pantheon, formerly the Church of Saint Genevieve, now destined to receive the bodies of the great men of the Revolution, but whose lodgings shifted as often as if they had been taken by the month.

The documents, as we have said, consisted chiefly of projects for the King's service, which he certainly never acted on, probably never approved of, and perhaps never saw. The utmost to which he could be liable, was such penalty as may be due to one who retains possession of plans submitted to his consideration, but which have in no shape obtained his assent. It was sufficiently hard to account Louis responsible for such advice of his ministers as he really adopted; but it was a dreadful extension of his responsibility to make him answerable for such as he had virtually rejected. Besides which, the story of Gamin was so self-contradictory in one circumstance, and so doubtful in others, as to carry no available proof that the papers had been in the King's possession; so that this new charge was as groundless as those brought up by the first committee, and arguing upon the known law of any

civilized country, the accusations against him ought to have been dismissed, as founded on the most notorious injustice.[1]

There was one circumstance which probably urged those into whose hands Louis had fallen, to proceed against his person to the uttermost. They knew that, in English history, a king had been condemned to death by his subjects, and were resolved that France should not remain behind England in the exhibition of a spectacle so interesting and edifying to a people newly regenerated. This parallel case would not perhaps have been thought a worthy precedent in other countries; but in France there is a spirit of wild enthusiasm, a desire of following out an example even to the most exaggerated point, and of outdoing, if possible, what other nations have done before them. This had doubtless its influence in causing Louis to be brought to the bar in 1792, like Charles of England in 1648.

The French statesmen did not pause to reflect, that the violent death of Charles only paved the way for a series of years spent in servitude under military despotism, and then to restoration of the legitimate sovereign. Had they regarded the precedent on this side, they would have obtained a glimpse into futurity, and might have presaged what were to be the consequences of the death of Louis. Neither did the French consider, that by a great part of the English nation the execution of Charles Stuart is regarded as a national crime, and

[1] [Mignet, t, i. p. 229; Montgaillard, t. iii. p. 265; Thiers, t. iii. p. 259; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 164; Madame Campan, v. ii. p. 222.]

the anniversary still observed as a day of fasting and penitence; that others who condemn the King's conduct in and preceding the Civil War, do, like the Whig Churchill, still consider his death as an unconstitutional action;[1] that the number is small indeed who think it justifiable even on the precarious grounds of state necessity; and that it is barely possible a small portion of enthusiasts may still exist, who glory in the deed as an act of popular vengeance.

But even among this last description of persons, the French regicides would find themselves entirely at a loss to vindicate the execution of Louis by the similar fate of Charles; and it would be by courtesy only, if at all, that they could be admitted to the honours of a sitting at a Calves-Head Club.[2]

The comparison between these unhappy monarchs fails in almost every point, excepting in the closing

[1] "Unhappy Stuart! harshly though that name
Grates on my ear, I should have died with shame,
To see my King before his subjects stand,
And at their bar hold up his royal hand;
At their command to hear the monarch plead,
By their decrees to see that monarch bleed.
What though thy faults were many, and were great—
What though they shook the fabric of the state?
In royalty secure thy person stood,
And sacred was the fountain of thy blood.
Vile ministers, who dared abuse their trust,
Who dared seduce a king to be unjust,
Vengeance, with justice leagued, with power made strong,
Had nobly crush'd—The King can do no wrong."—*Gotham.*

[2] [This club used to meet on the 30th January, at a tavern near Charing Cross, to celebrate the anniversary of the death of Charles I. Their toasts were, "The glorious year, 1648." "D———n to the race of the Stuarts." "The pious memory of Oliver Cromwell," &c.—See *Gent. Mag.* vol. v. p. 105; and "*History of the Calves-Head Club*."]

scene; and no parallel can, with justice to either, be drawn betwixt them. The most zealous Cavalier will, in these enlightened days, admit, that the early government of Charles was marked by many efforts to extend the prerogative beyond its legal bounds; that there were instances of oppressive fines, cruel punishment by mutilation, long and severe imprisonments in distant forts and castles; exertions of authority which no one seeks to justify, and which those who are the King's apologists can only endeavour to mitigate, by alleging the precedents of arbitrary times, or the interpretation of the laws by courtly ministers, and time-serving lawyers. The conduct of Louis XVI., from the hour he assumed the throne, was, on the contrary, an example of virtue and moderation.[1] Instead of levying ship-money and benevolences, Louis lightened the feudal services of the vassals, and the *corvée* among the peasantry. Where Charles endeavoured to enforce conformity to the Church of England by pillory and ear-slitting, Louis allowed the Protestants the free use of their religion, and discharged the use of torture in all cases whatever. Where Charles visited his Parliament to violate their freedom by arresting five of their members, Louis may be said to have surrendered himself an unresisting prisoner to the representatives of the people, whom he had voluntarily sum-

[1] ["No one act of tyranny can be laid to Louis's charge: and, far from restraining the liberty of the press, it was the Archbishop of Sens, the King's prime minister, who, in the name of his majesty, invited all writers to make known their opinions upon the form and manner of assembling the States-General."—De Stael, v. ii. p. 94.]

moned around him. But above all, Charles, in person, or by his generals, waged a long and bloody war with his subjects, fought battles in every county of England, and was only overcome and made prisoner, after a lengthened and deadly contest, in which many thousands fell on both sides. The conduct of Louis was in every respect different. He never offered one blow in actual resistance, even when he had the means in his power. He ordered up, indeed, the forces under Maréchal Broglio; but he gave them command to retire, so soon as it was evident that they must either do so, or act offensively against the people. In the most perilous situations of his life, he showed the utmost reluctance to shed the blood of his subjects. He would not trust his attendants with pistols, during the flight to Varennes; he would not give the officer of hussars orders to clear the passage, when his carriage was stopped upon the bridge. When he saw that the martial array of the Guards did not check the audacity of the assailants on the 10th of August, he surrendered himself to the Legislative Assembly, a prisoner at discretion, rather than mount his horse and place himself at the head of his faithful troops and subjects. The blood that was shed that day was without command of his. He could have no reason for encouraging such a strife, which, far from defending his person, then in the custody of the Assembly, was likely to place it in the most imminent danger. And in the very last stage, when he received private notice that there were individuals deter-

mined to save his life at peril of their own, he forbade the enterprise. "Let not a drop of blood be shed on my account," he said; "I would not consent to it for the safety of my crown: I never will purchase mere life at such a rate." These were sentiments perhaps fitter for the pious sectaries of the community of Friends, than for the King of a great nation; but such as they were, Louis felt and conscientiously acted on them. And yet his subjects could compare his character, and his pretended guilt, with the bold and haughty Stuart, who, in the course of the Civil War, bore arms in person, and charged at the head of his own regiment of guards!

Viewed in his kingly duty, the conduct of Louis is equally void of blame; unless it be that blame which attaches to a prince, too yielding and mild to defend the just rights of his crown. He yielded, with feeble struggling, to every demand in succession which was made upon him, and gave way to every inroad on the existing state of France. Instead of placing himself as a barrier between his people and his nobility, and bringing both to some fair terms of composition, he suffered the latter to be driven from his side, and by the ravaging their estates, and the burning of their houses, to be hurried into emigration. He adopted one popular improvement after another, each innovating on the royal authority, or derogatory to the royal dignity. Far from having deserved the charge of opposing the nation's claim of freedom, it would have been well for themselves and him, had he known how to limit his grant to that quantity of freedom which

they were qualified to make a legitimate use of; leaving it for future princes to slacken the reins of government, in proportion as the public mind in France should become formed to the habitual exercise of political rights.

The King's perfect innocence was therefore notorious to the whole world, but especially to those who now usurped the title of arraigning him; and men could hardly persuade themselves, that his life was seriously in danger. An ingenious contrivance of the Jacobins seems to have been intended to drive the wavering Girondists into the snare of voting for the King's trial. Saint Just, one of their number, made a furious speech against any formality being observed, save a decree of death, on the urgency of the occasion. "What availed," said the supporters of this brief and sure measure, "the ceremonies of grand and petty jury? The cannon which made a breach in the Tuileries, the unanimous shout of the people on the 10th of August, had come in place of all other solemnities. The Convention had no farther power to enquire; its sole duty was to pronounce, or rather confirm and execute, the doom of the sovereign people."

This summary proposal was highly applauded, not only by the furious crowds by whom the galleries were always occupied, but by all the exaggerations of the more violent democrats. They exclaimed that every citizen had the same right over the life of Louis which Brutus possessed over that of Cæsar. Others cried out, that the very fact of having reigned, was in itself a crime notorious

enough to dispense with further investigation, and authorize instant punishment.[1]

Stunned by these clamours, the Girondists and neutral party, like all feeble-minded men, chose a middle course, and instead of maintaining the King's innocence, adopted measures, calculated to save him indeed from immediate slaughter, but which ended by consigning him to a tribunal too timid to hear his cause justly. They resolved to urge the right of the National Convention to judge in the case of Louis.

There were none in the Convention who dared to avow facts to which their conscience bore witness, but the consequences of admitting which, were ingeniously urged by the sophist Robespierre, as a condemnation of their own conduct. "One party," said the wily logician, "must be clearly guilty; either the King, or the Convention, who have ratified the actions of the insurgent people. If you have dethroned an innocent and legal monarch, what are you but traitors? and why sit you here—why not hasten to the Temple, set Louis at liberty, install him again in the Tuileries, and beg on your knees for a pardon you have not merited? But if you have, in the great popular act which you have ratified, only approved of the deposition of a tyrant, summon him to the bar, and demand a reckoning for his crimes." This dilemma pressed on the mind of many members, who could not but see their own condemnation the necessary consequence

[1] [Lacretelle, t. x. p. 145.]

of the King's acquittal. And while some felt the force of this argument, all were aware of the obvious danger to be encountered from the wrath of the Jacobins and their satellites, should they dare to dissent from the vote which these demagogues demanded from the Assembly.

When Robespierre had ended, Pétion arose and moved that the King should be tried before the Convention. It is said, the Mayor of Paris took the lead in this cruel persecution, because Louis had spoken to him sharply about the tumultuary inroad of the Jacobin rabble into the Tuileries on the 20th of June; and when Pétion attempted to reply, had pointed to the broken grating through which the entrance had been forced, and sternly commanded him to be silent. If this was true, it was a bitter revenge for so slight an offence, and the subsequent fate of Pétion is the less deserving of pity.

The motion was carried [Dec. 3] without opposition,[1] and the next chapter affords us the melancholy results.

[1] [Thiers, t. iii. p. 257.]

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRIAL OF LOUIS.—*Indecision of the Girondists, and its Effects.—The Royal Family insulted by the Agents of the Community.—The King deprived of his Son's society.—The King brought to trial before the Convention —His first Examination—Carried back to Prison amidst Insult and Abuse.—Tumult in the Assembly.—The King deprived of Intercourse with his Family.—Malesherbes appointed as Counsel to defend the King—and De Seze.—Louis again brought before the Convention—Opening Speech of De Seze—King remanded to the Temple.—Stormy Debate.—Eloquent Attack of Vergniaud on the Jacobins.—Sentence of* DEATH *pronounced against the King—General Sympathy for his Fate.—Dumouriez arrives in Paris—Vainly tries to avert the King's Fate.—* LOUIS XVI. BEHEADED *on* 21*st January*, 1793—MARIE ANTOINETTE *on the* 16*th October thereafter—The Princess* ELIZABETH *in May* 1794—*The Dauphin perishes, by cruelty, June* 8*th*, 1795.—*The Princess Royal exchanged for La Fayette,* 19*th December*, 1795.

WE have already said, that the vigorous and masculine, as well as virtuous exhortations of Madame Roland, were thrown away upon her colleagues, whose fears were more than female. The Girondists could not be made to perceive that, though their ferocious adversaries were feared through France, yet they were also hated. The moral feeling of all Frenchmen who had any left,

detested the authors of a long train of the most cold-blooded murders; the suspicions of all men of property were attached to the conduct of a party, whose leaders rose from indigence to affluence by fines, confiscations, sequestrations, besides every other kind of plunder, direct and indirect. If the majority of the Convention had adopted the determination of boldly resisting their unprincipled tyrants, and preventing, at whatever hazard, the murder of the King, the strength of the country would probably have supported a constituted authority against the usurpations of the Community of Paris, which had no better title to tyrannize over the Convention, and by so doing to govern France at pleasure, than had the council of the meanest town in the kingdom.

The Girondists ought to have been sensible, that, even by thwarting this favourite measure, they could not increase the hatred which the Jacobins already entertained against them, and should have known that further delay to give open battle, would only be regarded as a timid indecision, which must have heated their enemies, in proportion as it cooled their friends. The truckling, time-serving policy which they observed on this occasion, deprived the Girondists of almost all chance of forming a solid and substantial interest in the country. By a bold, open, and manly defence of the King, they would have done honour to themselves as public men, willing to discharge their duty at the risk of their lives. They would have been sure of whatever number could be gathered, either of Royalists, who were beginning to raise a head in

Bretagne and La Vendée, or of Constitutionalists, who feared the persecution of the Jacobins. The materials were already kindled for those insurrections, which afterwards broke out at Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon, and generally through the south and west of France. They might have brought up five or six thousand Federates from the departments, and the force would then have been in their own hands. They might, by showing a bold and animated front, have regained possession of the national guard, which was only prevented by a Jacobin commander and his staff officers, as well as by their timidity, from throwing off a yoke so bloody and odious as that which they were groaning under. But to dare this, it was necessary that they should have the encouragement of the Convention; and that body, managed as it was by the Girondists, showed a timorous unwillingness to support the measures of the Jacobins, which implied their dislike indeed, but also evinced their fear.

Mean time the King, with the Queen, his sister, and their children, the Dauphin and the Princess Royal, remained in the tower of the Temple, more uncomfortably lodged, and much more harshly treated, than state prisoners before the Revolution had been in the execrable Bastile.[1] The royal prisoners were under the especial charge of the Commune of Paris, who, partly from their gross ignorance, partly from their desire to display their

[1] The reader may compare the account which Marmontel gives of his residence in the Bastile, with the faithful Cléry's narrative of Louis's captivity in the Temple.

furious Jacobinical zeal, did all in their power to embitter their captivity.

Pétion, whose presence brought with it so many cruel recollections, studiously insulted him by his visits to the prison. The municipal officers sent thither to ensure the custody of the King's person, and to be spies upon his private conversation, were selected among the worst and most malignant Jacobins. His efforts at equanimity, and even civility, towards these brutal jailers, were answered with the most gross insolence. One of them, a mason, in his working dress, had thrown himself into an arm-chair, where, decorated with his municipal scarf, he reposed at his ease. The King condescended to ask him, by way of conversation, where he wrought. He answered gruffly, "at the church of Saint Genevieve."—"I remember," said the King, "I laid the foundation stone—a fine edifice; but I have heard the foundation is insecure."—"It is more sure," answered the fellow, "than the thrones of tyrants." The King smiled and was silent. He endured with the same patience the insolent answer of another of these officials. The man not having been relieved at the usual and regular hour, the King civilly expressed his hopes that he would find no inconvenience from the delay. "I am come here," answered the ruffian, "to watch your conduct, not for you to trouble yourself with mine. No one," he added, fixing his hat firm on his brow, "least of all you, have any business to concern themselves with it." We have seen prisons, and are sure that even the steeled jailer, accustomed as he is to scenes of distress, is not in the

habit, unprovoked and wantonly, of answering with reproach and insult such ordinary expressions of civility, when offered by the worst criminals. The hearts of these men, who, by chance as it were, became dungeon-keepers, and whose first captive had been many years their King, must have been as hard as the nether millstone.[1]

While such scenes occurred within the prison, those who kept watch without, either as sentinels or as patrols of the Jacobins, (who maintained stern vigilance in the environs of the prison,) were equally ready to contribute their share of vexation and insult. Pictures and placards, representing the royal family under the hands of the executioner, were pasted up where the King and Queen might see them. The most violent patriotic songs, turning upon the approaching death of Monsieur and Madame Veto, were sung below their windows, and the most frightful cries for their blood disturbed such rest as prisoners can obtain. The head of the Princess of Lamballe was brought under their window on the 3d September, and one of the municipal officers would have enticed the royal family to the window that they might see this ghastly spectacle, had not the other, "of milder mood," prevented them from complying. When questioned concerning the names of these two functionaries by some less savage persons, who wished to punish the offending ruffian, Louis would only mention that of the more humane of the two; so little was this

[1] [Cléry, p. 55; Thiers t. iii. p. 223; Mignet, t. i. p. 234; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 141.]

unhappy prince addicted to seek revenge, even for the most studied cruelties practised against him.[1]

The conduct of the Community increased in rigour, as the process against Louis seemed to draw nearer. The most ordinary points of personal accommodation were made subjects of debate ere they could be granted, and that upon the King's being permitted to shave himself, lasted a long while. Every article was taken from him, even to his toothpick and penknife, and the Queen and princesses were deprived of their scissors and housewives. This led to a touching remark of Louis. He saw his sister, while at work, obliged to bite asunder a thread which she had no means of cutting, and the words escaped him, "Ah! you wanted nothing in your pretty house at Montreuil."—"Dearest brother," answered the princess, whose character was that of sanctity, purity of thought, and benevolence, "can I complain of any thing, since Heaven has preserved me to share and to comfort, in some degree, your hours of captivity?" It was, indeed, in the society of his family that the charac-

[1] ["The 3d of September, at three o'clock, just after dinner, the most horrid shouts were heard. The officer on guard in the room behaved well: he shut the door and the window, and even drew the curtains, to prevent their seeing any thing. Several officers of the guard and of the municipality now arrived: the former insisted that the King should show himself at the windows; fortunately, the latter opposed it; but, on his majesty's asking what was the matter, a young officer of the guard replied, 'Well! since you will know, it is the head of Madame de Lamballe that they want to show you.' At these words the Queen was overcome with horror: it was the only occasion in which her firmness abandoned her."—DUCHESSE D'ANGOULEME, *Private Memoirs*, p. 18.]

ter of Louis shone to the greatest advantage; and if, when on the throne, he did not always possess the energies demanded of his high situation, in the dungeon of the Temple misfortune threw around him the glories of a martyr. His morning hours were spent in instructing or amusing the young dauphin, a task for which the King's extensive information well qualified him. The captives enjoyed, as they best might, a short interval, when they were permitted to walk in the gardens of the Temple, sure to be insulted (like Charles I. in the same situation) by the sentinels, who puffed volumes of tobacco-smoke in their faces as they passed them, while others annoyed the ears of the ladies with licentious songs, or the most cruel denunciations.[1]

All this Louis and his family endured with such sainted patience, that several who obtained access to his person were moved by the spectacle of royalty reduced to a situation so melancholy, yet sustained with such gentleness and fortitude. Some of the municipal officers themselves became melted, and changed their ideas of the King, when they beheld him in so new and singular a light.

Stories of the insults which he daily received and of the meekness with which he sustained them, began to circulate among the citizens of the higher classes; and, joined to their fear of falling completely under the authority of the Sans Culottes, led many of the Republicans to cast back their thoughts to the constitution of 1791, with all its faults, and with its monarchical executive government.

[1] [Cléry, pp. 60, 142.]

The more wise and sensible of the Girondists began to suspect that they had been too hasty in erecting their favourite republic, on ground incapable of affording a sound and secure foundation for such an edifice. Buzot gives testimony to this, dated later, no doubt, than the period we are treating of; but the grounds of the reasoning existed as much at the King's trial as after the expulsion of the Girondists. The passage is remarkable. "My friends," says this distinguished Girondist, "preserved a long time the hopes of establishing a republic in France, even when all seemed to demonstrate that the enlightened classes, whether from prejudice or from just reasoning, felt indisposed to that form of government. That hope did not forsake my friends when the most wicked and the vilest of men obtained possession of the minds of the inferior classes, and corrupted them by the opportunities they offered of license and pillage. My friends reckoned on the lightness and aptitude to change proper to the French character, and which they considered to be peculiarly suitable to a republican nation. I have always considered that conclusion as entirely false, and have repeatedly in my heart despaired of my darling wish to establish a republic in my country." In another place he says, "It must not be dissembled that the majority of Frenchmen earnestly desired royalty, and the constitution of 1791. In Paris, the wish was general, and was expressed most freely, though only in confidential society, and among private friends. There were only a few noble and elevated minds who felt themselves worthy to be Republicans, and whom the

example of the Americans had encouraged to essay the project of a similar government in France, the country of frivolity and mutability. The rest of the nation, with the exception of the ignorant wretches, without either sense or substance, who vomited abuse against royalty, as at another time they would have done against a commonwealth, and all without knowing why,—the rest of the nation were all attached to the constitution of 1791, and looked on the pure Republicans as a very well-meaning kind of madmen."[1]

In these lines, written by one of the most sincère of their number, we read the condemnation of the Girondists, who, to adventure the precarious experiment of a republic, in which they themselves saw so many difficulties, were contented to lend their arms and countenance to the destruction of that very government, which they knew to be desired by all the enlightened classes of France except themselves, and which demolition only made room for the dreadful triumvirate,—Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.

But we also see, from this and other passages, that there existed feelings, both in Paris and in the departments, which, if the Convention had made a manly appeal to them, might have saved the King's life, and prevented the Reign of Terror. There began to arise more obvious signs of disaffection to the rulers, and of interest in the King's fate. These were increased when he was brought before the Convention for examination—an occasion upon

[1] [See Mémoires de Buzot, par Guadet, p. 87.]

which Louis was treated with the same marked appearance of premeditated insult, which had been offered to him when in his dungeon. He had as yet been allowed to enjoy the society of his son, though his intercourse with the other members of the family had been much abridged. He was passionately attached to this unhappy son, who answered his affection, and showed early token of talents which were doomed never to blossom. It was the cruel resolution of his jailers to take the boy from his father on the very morning [December 11] when Louis was to undergo an interrogatory before the Convention. In other words, to give the deepest blow to his feelings, at the very moment when it was necessary he should combine his whole mental powers for defending his life against his subtle and powerful enemies.

This cruel measure produced in some respect the effect desired. The King testified more deep affliction than he had yet manifested. The child was playing at the game called Siam with his father, and by no effort could the dauphin get beyond the number *sixteen*. "That is a very unlucky number, said the child." This petty omen seemed soon accomplished by the commissioners of the Assembly, who, without deigning further explanation than that Louis must prepare to receive the Mayor of Paris, tore the child from his father, and left him to his sorrow. In about two hours, during which the trampling of many horses was heard, and a formidable body of troops with artillery were drawn up around the prison, the mayor appeared, a man called Chambon, weak and illite-

rate, the willing tool of the ferocious Commune in which he presided. He read to the King the decree of the Convention, that Louis Capet should be brought to their bar. "Capet," answered Louis, "is not my name—it was that of one of my ancestors. I could have wished, sir, that I had not been deprived of the society of my son during the two hours I have expected you, but it is only of a piece with the usage I have experienced for four months. I will attend you to the Convention, not as acknowledging their right to summon me, but because I yield to the superior power of my enemies."[1]

The crowd pressed much on the King during the passage from the Temple to the Tuileries, where the Convention had now established their sittings, as men who had slain and taken possession. Loud cries were heard, demanding the life of the tyrant; yet Louis preserved the most perfect composure, even when he found himself standing as a criminal before an assembly of his native subjects, born most of them in a rank which excluded them from judicial offices, till he himself had granted the privilege.[2]

"Louis," said the president—the versatile, timorous, but subtle Barrère, "be seated."[3] The

[1] [Cléry, p. 153.]

[2] ["Before the King entered, Barrère recommended tranquillity to the Assembly, 'in order that the guilty man might be awed by the silence of the tomb.'"—LACRETELLE, t. x. p. 174.]

[3] ["When the president said to his King, '*Louis, asseyez vous!*' we feel more indignation even than when he is accused of crimes which he had never committed. One must have sprung from the very dust not to respect past obligations, particularly when misfortune has rendered them sacred; and vulgarity

King sat down accordingly, and listened without apparent emotion to a long act of accusation, in which every accident that had arisen out of the Revolution was gravely charged as a point of indictment against the King. He replied by short laconic answers, which evinced great presence of mind and composure, and alleged the decrees of the National Assembly as authority for the affair of Nancy, and the firing on the people in the Champ-de-Mars, both of which were urged against him as aggressions on the people. One or two replies we cannot omit inserting.

"You are accused," said the president, "of having authorized money to be distributed to poor unknowns in the suburb of Saint Antoine. What have you to reply?"—"That I know no greater pleasure," answered Louis, "than in giving assistance to the needy."—"You held a review of the Swiss at five o'clock in the morning of the 10th of August."—"I did," replied the King, "review the troops that were about my person. It was in presence of the constituted authorities, the department, and the Mayor of Paris. I had sent in vain to request from the Convention a deputation of its members, and I came with my family to place myself in their hands."—"Why did you double the strength of the Swiss Guards at that time?" demanded the president.—"It was done with the knowledge of all the constituted authorities," said the King, in a tone of perfect composure; "I was myself a constituted authority, it was my duty to

joined to crime inspires us with as much contempt as horror."—De Staël, v. ii. p. 84.]

defend my office."—"You have caused," said the president, "the blood of Frenchmen to be shed. What have you to reply?"—"It was not *I* who caused it," answered Louis, speaking with more emphasis than he had before used.

The King was carried back to his prison, amid threats and abuse from the same banditti whose ranks he had before traversed.

In replying to the articles alleged against him, Louis had followed a different course from Charles, who refused to plead before the tribunal at which he was arraigned. The latter acted with the high spirit of a prince, unwilling to derogate from the honour of the crown he had worn; the former, as a man of honour and probity, was desirous of defending his character wherever it should be attacked, without stopping to question the authority of the court which was met to try him.

A great tumult followed in the Assembly the moment the King had withdrawn. The Jacobins became sensible that the scene which had just passed had deeply affected many of the neutral party, and was not unlikely to influence their final votes. They demanded an instant decree of condemnation, and that in the name of the oppressed people. "You who have heard the tyrant," said Billaud-Varennes, "ought in justice to hear the people whom he has oppressed." The Convention knew well what was meant by the appearance of the people at the bar, and while they trembled at this threat, Duhem[1] exclaimed, "I move that Louis

[1] [Duhem was born at Lille in 1760. He afterwards prac-

be hung this very night." Some received this with a triumphant laugh; the majority, however, retained too much sense of shame to permit themselves to be hurried farther that evening. They indulged the King with the selection of counsel to defend him.[1]

The monarch, on returning to his prison, had found he was doomed to solitary confinement. All intercourse with his family was denied him. He wept, but neither wife, sister, nor child, was permitted to share his tears. It was for the fate of his son that he showed the deepest interest. Yet, anxious as his apprehensions were, they could not reach the extremities to which the child was reduced. The heart of man could not have imagined the cruelty of his lot.

Louis chose for his counsel two lawyers of celebrity, carefully selecting such as he thought would incur least risk of danger by the task imposed. One of these, Tronchet,[2] was too sensible to the honour of his profession to hesitate a moment in accepting the perilous office; but the other, Target, refused to undertake it. The phrase used by this unworthy jurisconsult, in his letter to the President of the Convention, seemed to involve the King's

tised physic at Quesnoi. After the amnesty of Oct. 1795, he returned to his profession, and died in 1807, at Mentz.]

[1] [Mignet, t. i. p. 235; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 179.]

[2] [One of Napoleon's first acts on becoming first consul, was to place Tronchet at the head of the Court of Cassation. "Tronchet," he said, "was the soul of the civil code, as I was its demonstrator. He was gifted with a singularly profound and correct understanding, but he could not descend to developements."—Las Cases, vol. ii. p. 234. Tronchet died in 1806, and was buried in the Pantheon.]

condemnation. "A free Republican," he said, "ought not to undertake functions of which he feels himself incapable." Timid as the Convention was, this excuse was heard with disapprobation. It was declaring, that the defence of the King was untenable by any friend of the present system.[1]

Several persons offered their services[2] with voluntary devotion, but the preference was claimed by Lamoignon-Malesherbes,[3] who, twice called by Louis to be a member of his council, when the office was the object of general ambition, alleged his right to a similar function, when others might reckon it dangerous.[4] This burst of honourable self-devotion awakened a sentiment of honour in the Convention, which, could it have lasted, might have even yet prevented a great national crime.

Paris began to show symptoms of returning interest in the person of Louis. The oft-repeated calumnies against him seemed to lose their influence on all but the ignorant multitude, and hired bandits. The honest devotion of Malesherbes,

[1] ["Cambacérès declared, that Target's example endangered public morality. Target attempted in vain to repair the disgrace, by publishing a short defence of the King."—LACRETELLE, t. x. p. 182.]

[2] ["Tronson du Coudrai, who perished in the deserts of Sinamari; Guillaume, the courageous author of the petition of the twenty thousand; Huet de Guerville; Sourdat de Troyes; and Madame Olympe de Gouges.—Lalli de Tolendal, Malouet, and Necker published admirable pleadings for Louis, but the Convention would not allow them to be read."—LACRETELLE, t. x. p. 185.]

[3] [See *ante*, vol. viii., p. 79.]

[4] ["Je lui dois le même service, lorsque c'est une fonction que bien des gens trouvent dangereuse."—See his letter to the President of the Convention in LACRETELLE, t. x. p. 182.]

whose character was known through the nation as a man of talent, honour, and probity, reflected a forcible light on that of his royal client, who had, in the hour of need, found such a defender.[1] Deséze, an excellent lawyer, was afterwards added to the King's band of counsel;[2] but the King gained little more by this indulgence, excepting the consolation of communicating with such men as Malesherbes and his two associates, at a time when no other friend was suffered to approach him, excepting the faithful Cléry, his valet-de-chambre.[3]

The lawyers entertained some hopes, and, in the spirit of their profession, exulted when they saw how facts contradicted the charges of the prosecutors. "Moderate your satisfaction, my friends," said Louis; "all these favourable circumstances

[1] ["The first time M. Malesherbes entered the Temple, the King clasped him in his arms, and exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, 'Ah! is it you, my friend! you see to what the excess of my love for the people has brought me, and the self-denial which induced me to consent to the removal of the troops intended to protect my throne and person, against the designs of a factious assembly: you fear not to endanger your own life to save mine; but all will be useless: they will bring me to the scaffold: no matter; I shall gain my cause, if I leave an unspotted memory behind me."—Hue, *Dernières Années de la Vie de Louis XVI.*, p. 42.]

[2] [Deséze was born at Bourdeaux in 1750. He accepted no office under Napoleon; but on the restoration of the Bourbons he was appointed First President of the Court of Cassation, and afterwards created a peer of France. He died at Paris in 1828.]

[3] Cléry we have seen and known, and the form and manners of that model of pristine faith and loyalty can never be forgotten. Gentlemanlike and complaisant in his manners, his deep gravity and melancholy features announced that the sad scenes in which he had acted a part so honourable, were never for a moment out of his memory. [Cléry died at Hitzing, near Vienna, in 1809. In 1817, Louis XVIII. gave letters of nobility to his daughter.]

are well known to the gentlemen of the Convention, and if they considered them as entitled to weight in my favour, I should not be in this difficulty. You take, I fear, a fruitless task in hand, but let us perform it as a last duty." When the term of his second appearance at the Convention arrived, he expressed anxiety at the thoughts of appearing before them with his beard and hair overgrown, owing to his being deprived of razors and scissors. "Were it not better your Majesty went as you are at present," said the faithful Cléry, "that all men may see the usage you have received?"—"It does not become me," answered the King, "to seek to obtain pity."[1] With the same spirit, he commanded his advocates to avoid all appeals to the passions or the feelings of the judges and audience, and to rest his defence exclusively upon logical deductions from the evidence produced.[2]

When summoned to the Convention, [Dec. 26,][3] Louis was compelled to wait for a time in the outer hall, where he walked about conversing

[1] [Cléry, p. 187.]

[2] ["When the pathetic peroration of M. Deséze was read to the King, the evening before it was to be delivered to the Assembly, 'I have to request of you,' he said, 'to make a painful sacrifice; strike out of your pleading the peroration. It is enough for me to appear before such judges, and show my entire innocence; I will not move their feelings.'"—LACRETELLE, t. x. p. 197.]

[3] ["The King was conveyed in the mayor's carriage. He evinced, on the way, as much coolness as on former occasions; spoke of Seneca, Livy, and the public hospitals; and addressed himself, in a delicate vein of pleasantry, to one of the municipality, who sat in his carriage with his hat on."—THIERS, t. iii. p. 277.]

with his counsel. A deputy who passed, heard Malesherbes during this intercourse use to his royal client the courtesies of "*Sire—Your Majesty.*" "What renders you so bold," he said, "that you utter these prohibited expressions?"—"Contempt of life," answered the generous Malesherbes.[1]

Deséze opened his case with great ability He pleaded with animation the right which the King had to the character of inviolability, a right confirmed to him by the Legislative Assembly after the flight to Varennes, and which implied a complete indemnity for that crime, even supposing a journey from his capital in a post carriage, with a few attendants, could be deemed criminal. But he urged that, if the Convention did not respect his inviolability—if, in a word, they did not consider him as a King, he was then entitled to the formal securities provided for every citizen by the laws. He ridiculed the idea that, with a trifling force of Swiss, Louis could meditate any serious injury against the Convention. "He prepared," said Deséze, "for his defence, as you citizens would doubtless do, when you heard that an armed multitude were on their way to surprise you in your sanctuary." He closed an excellent pleading with an enumeration of the benefits which Louis had conferred on the French nation, and reminded them that their King had given them liberty so soon as they desired to be free. Louis himself said a few words with much firmness.[2] He was remanded to the Temple, and a stormy debate commenced.

[1] [Lacretelle, t. x. p. 199.]

[2] ["You have heard my defence; I will not recapitulate it;

At first, the Jacobins attempted to carry all by a clamorous demand of the vote. Lanjuinais replied to them with unexpected spirit, charged them with planning and instigating the assault on the 10th of August, and then with turning on the King the blame which justly lay with themselves alone. Dreadful outcries followed this true and intrepid speech. "Let the friends of the despot die with him!" was the general exclamation of the Jacobins; "to the Abbaye—to the scaffold with the perjured deputy, who slanders the glorious 10th of August!"—"Be it so," answered Lanjuinais; "better death, than the crime of pronouncing an unjust sentence."

The Girondists were too much themselves accessory to the attack on the Tuileries to follow this bold and manly line of defence, and Lanjuinais stood unsupported in his opinion.

St Just and Robespierre eagerly called for a doom of death. The former accused the King of a design to cheat the people out of their liberties by

when addressing you, probably for the last time, I declare that my conscience has nothing to reproach itself with, and that my defenders have said nothing but the truth. I have no fears for the public examination of my conduct; but my heart bleeds at the accusation brought against me, of having been the cause of the misfortunes of my people; and, most of all, of having shed their blood on the 10th of August. The multiplied proofs I have given, in every period of my reign, of my love for my people, and the manner in which I have conducted myself towards them, might, I had hoped, have saved me from so cruel an imputation."—THIERS, t. iii. p. 281.

"The King withdrew with his defenders. He embraced M. Desèze, and exclaimed, 'This is indeed true eloquence! I am tranquil.—I shall at least have an honoured memory.—The French will regret my death.'"—LACRETELLE, t. x. p. 210.]

a pretended show of submission to their will, and an affected moderation in exercising his authority. On the 10th of August, (he had the effrontery to state this,) the King, entering the hall of the Legislature with armed followers, (the small escort who had difficulty in protecting him through the armed crowd,) had violated the asylum of the laws. "Besides," as he triumphantly concluded, "was it for a people who had declared war against all tyrants, to sorrow for the fate of their own?"[1] Robespierre openly disowned the application of legal forms, and written rubrics of law, to such a case as was before the Convention.[2] The people who had asserted their own right in wresting the sceptre from the hands of Louis, had a right to punish him for having swayed it. He talked of the case being already decided by the unanimous voice and act of the people, from whom all legal authority emanated, and whose authority was paramount to that of the Convention, which were only their representatives.

Vergniaud, the most eloquent of the Girondists, found nothing better to propose, than that the case of Louis should be decided by an appeal to the nation. He alleged that the people, who, in solemn

[1] ["St Just, after having searched in vain for authentic facts against the King, finished by declaring, that 'no one could reign innocently; and nothing could better prove the necessity of the inviolability of kings than this maxim; for there is no king who might not be accused in some way or another, if there were no constitutional barrier placed around him.'"—De Staël, vol. ii. p. 86.]

[2] ["Il est des principes indestructibles, supérieurs aux rubriques consacrées par l'habitude et les préjugés."]

federation had sworn, in the Champ-de-Mars, to recognise the Constitution, had thereby sworn the inviolability of the King. This was truly said; but, such being the case, what right had the Convention to protract the King's trial by sending the case from before themselves to the people? If his inviolability had been formally admitted and sworn to by the nation, what had the Convention more to do than recognise the inviolability with which the nation had invested the monarch, and dismiss him from the bar accordingly?

The explanation lay here;—that the eloquent orator was hampered and constrained in his reasoning, by the difficulty of reconciling his own conduct, and that of his associates, to the principles which he was now willing to adopt as those that were just and legal. If the person of the King was indeed inviolable, what was to be thought of their consistency, who, by the means of their daring and devoted associates, Barbaroux and Rebecque, had actually brought up the force of Marseillois, who led the van, and were, in fact, the efficient and almost the only means by which the palace of that inviolable sovereign was stormed, his guards slaughtered, his person committed to prison, and, finally, his life brought in danger? It was the obvious and personal answer arising out of their own previous manœuvres, the *argumentum ad hominem*, as it is called by logicians, which hung a padlock on the lips of the eloquent Vergniaud, while using the argument which, in itself most just and true, was irreconcilable with the revolutionary measures to which he had been an express party. "Do not

evil, that good may come of it," is a lesson which may be learned, not indeed in the transcendental philosophy which authorizes the acting of instant and admitted wrong, with the view of obtaining some distant, hypothetical, and contingent good; but in the rules of Christian faith and true philosophy, which commands that each case be weighed on its own circumstances, and decided upon the immutable rules of right or wrong, without admitting any subterfuge founded on the hope of remote contingencies and future consequences.

But Vergniaud's oratory was freed from these unhappy trammels, when, with the fervour of a poet, and the inspiration of a prophet, he declaimed against the faction of Jacobins, and announced the consequences of that sanguinary body's ascending to supreme power, by placing their first step on the body of Louis. The picture which he drew of the coming evil seemed too horrible for reality; and yet the scenes which followed even more than realized the predictions of the baffled Republican, who saw too late and too clearly the tragic conclusion of the scenes, in which he had borne so active a part.

The appeal to the people, or to the nation, had been argued against by the Jacobin speakers, as opening the nearest road to civil war. Indeed it was one of the many objections to this intermediate and evasive plan, that the people of France, convened in their different bodies, were likely to come to very different conclusions on the King's impeachment. Where the Jacobin clubs were strong and numerous, they would have been sure, according to

the maxim of their union, to use the compulsory but ready means of open violence, to disturb the freedom of voting on this important question, and would thus have carried by forcible measures the vote of death. In departments in which Constitutionalists and Royalists had strong interest, it was probable that force would have been repelled by force; and upon the whole, in France, where the law had been long a dead letter, the arbitrement of the nation on the King's fate must and would have proved a bloody one.

But from that picture which must have followed the success of his party on this memorable occasion, Vergniaud endeavoured to avert the thoughts of his hearers, while he strove to fix them on the crimes and criminal ambition of the Jacobins. "It is *they* who wish civil war," he exclaimed, "who threaten with daggers the National Convention of France—they who preach in the tribune, and in the market-place, doctrines subversive of all social order. *They* are the men who desire civil war, who accuse justice of pusillanimity, because she will not strike before conviction—who call common humanity a proof of conspiracy, and accuse all those as traitors to their country who will not join in acts of robbery and assassination—those, in fine, who pervert every sentiment and principle of morality, and by the grossest flatteries endeavour to gain the popular assent and countenance to the most detestable crimes."

He dissected the arts of the demagogues in terms equally just and severe. They had been artfully referred to the Temple as the cause of every dis-

tress under which the populace laboured; after the death of Louis, which they so eagerly pursued, they would have the same reasons and the same power for directing the odium of every distress or misfortune against the Convention, and making the representatives of France equally obnoxious to the people, as they had now rendered the dethroned King. He concluded with a horrible picture of Paris under the domination of Jacobinism, which was, however, exceeded by the facts that ensued. "To what horrors," he said, "will not Paris be delivered, when she becomes the prey of a horde of desperate assassins? Who will inhabit a city, where Death and Desolation will then fix their court? Who will console the ruined citizen, stripped of the wealth he has honourably acquired, or relieve the wants of his family, which his exertions can no longer supply? Go in that hour of need," he continued, "and ask bread of those who have precipitated you from competence into ruin, and they will answer, 'Hence! dispute with hungry hounds for the carcasses of those we have last murdered—or, if you would drink, here is the blood we have lately shed—other nourishment we have none to afford you!'"

The eloquence of Vergniaud,[1] and the exertions of his associates, were in vain. Barrère, the auxiliary of the Jacobins, though scarcely the partaker of their confidence, drew off as usual many of the timid host of neutrals, by alleging specious reasons,

[1] ["Vergniaud was an indolent man, and required to be stimulated; but when excited, his eloquence was true, forcible, penetrating, and sincere."—DUMONT, p. 321.]

of which the convincing power lay in this, that they must consult their own safety rather than the cause of justice. The appeal to the people, on which the Girondists relied as the means of reprieving rather than saving the King—of giving their consciences the quieting opiate, that he died not by their direct agency—was rejected by 423 voices against 281. A decisive appeal was made to the Convention on the question, to what punishment the dethroned monarch should be subjected.[1]

The bravoes of the Jacobins surrounded the place of meeting on every point of access while this final vote was called, and, to men already affrighted with their situation, added every motive of terror that words, and sometimes acts of violence, could convey. "Think not," they said, "to rob the people of their prey. If you acquit Louis, we go instantly to the Temple to destroy him with his whole family, and we add to his massacre that of all who befriended him." Undoubtedly, among the terrified deputies, there were some moved by these horrible arguments, who conceived that, in giving a vote for Louis's life, they would endanger their own, without saving him. Still, however, among this overawed and trembling band of judges, there were many whose hearts failed them as they reflected on the crime they were about to commit, and who endeavoured to find some evasion stopping short of regicide. Captivity till the peace was in general proposed as a composition. The philosophic huma-

[1] [Thiers, t. iii. p. 290; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 213; Toulongeon, t. iii. p. 187.]

nity of Condorcet threw in fetters, to make the condition more acceptable to the Jacobins. Others voted for death conditionally. The most intense anxiety prevailed during the vote; and even the banditti in the tribunes suspended their usual howls, and only murmured death to the voter, when the opinion given was for the more lenient punishment. When the Duke of Orleans, who had returned from England on the fall of La Fayette, and sat as a member of the Convention, under the absurd name of Citizen L'Egalité—when this base prince was asked his vote, there was a deep pause; and when the answer proved Death, a momentary horror electrified the auditors.[1] When the voices were numbered, the direct doom was carried by a majority of fifty-three, being the difference between 387 and 334. The president, Vergniaud, announced that the doom of DEATH was pronounced against Louis Capet.[2]

[1] His own death, by the guillotine, in the same year, was hardly sufficient retribution for his fiendlike conduct on this afflicting occasion.

[2] ["When, on the 17th January, M. de Malesherbes went to the Temple to announce the result of the vote, he found Louis with his forehead resting on his hands, and absorbed in a deep reverie. Without enquiring concerning his fate, he said, 'For two hours I have been considering whether, during my whole reign, I have voluntarily given any cause of complaint to my subjects; with perfect sincerity I declare, that I deserve no reproach at their hands, and that I have never formed a wish but for their happiness.'"—LACRETELLE, t. x. p. 244.

"On the 18th, the King desired me to look in the library for the volume of Hume's History which contained the death of Charles I., which he read the following days. I found, on this occasion, that since his coming to the Temple, his Majesty had perused two hundred and fifty volumes."—CLERY, p. 216.—"On

Let none, we repeat, dishonour the parallel passage in England's history, by comparing it with this disgraceful act of murder, committed by a few in rabid fury of gain, by the greater part in mere panic and cowardice. That deed, which Algernon Sidney pronounced the bravest and justest ever done in England—that *facinus tam illustre* of Milton—was acted by men, from whose principles and feelings we differ entirely; but not more than the ambition of Cromwell differed from that of the bloodthirsty and envious Robespierre, or the political views of Hutchinson and his associates, who acted all in honour, from those of the timid and pedantic Girondists.

In Paris there was a general feeling for the King's condition, and a wish that he might be saved; but never strong enough to arise into the resolution to effect his safety.[1] Dumouriez himself came to Paris with all the splendour of a conqueror, whose victory at Jemappes had added Belgium, as Flanders began to be called, to the French nation;

the 20th, Santerre appeared with the Executive Council. The sentence of death was read by Garat. No alteration took place in the King's countenance; I observed only, at the word 'conspiracy,' a smile of indignation appear upon his lips; but at the words, 'shall suffer the punishment of death,' the heavenly expression of his face, when he looked on those around him, showed them that death had no terrors for innocence."—CLERY, p. 222.]

[1] ["At the representation of the comedy called 'L'Ami des Lois' at the Français, every allusion to the King's trial was caught and received with unbounded applause. At the Vaudeville, on one of the characters in 'La Chaste Susanne' saying to the two Elders, 'You cannot be accusers and judges at the same time,' the audience obliged the actor to repeat the passage several times."—CLERY, p. 204.]

and there can be no doubt, that whatever might be his ulterior design, which his situation and character render somewhat doubtful, his purpose was, in the first place, to secure the person of Louis from farther danger or insult. But conqueror as he was, Dumouriez, though more favourably placed than La Fayette had been upon a similar attempt, was far from being, with respect to Paris, in the same independent situation in which Cromwell had been to London, or Cæsar to Rome.

The army with which he had accomplished his victories was yet but half his own. Six commissioners from the Convention, Danton himself being the principal, had carefully remained at his headquarters, watching his motions, controlling his power, encouraging the private soldiers of each regiment to hold Jacobin clubs exclusive of the authority of the general, studiously placing in their recollection at every instant, that the doctrines of liberty and equality rendered the soldier to a certain point independent of his commander; and reminding them that they conquered by the command of Dumouriez, indeed, but under the auspices of the Republic, to whom the general, as they themselves, was but a servant and factor.[1] The more absolute the rule of a community, the more do its members enjoy any relaxation of such severe bonds; so that he who can with safety preach a decay of discipline to an army, of which discipline is the very essence, is sure to find willing listeners. A great part of Dumouriez's army was unsettled

[1] [Dumouriez, v. iii. p. 278; Jomini, t. ii. p. 265.]

in their minds by doctrines, which taught an independence of official authority inconsistent with their situation as soldiers, but proper, they were assured, to their quality of citizens.

The manner in which Pache, the minister of war, who, brought into office by Roland, deserted his benefactor to join the Jacobin faction, had conducted his branch of the administration, was so negligent, that it had given ground for serious belief that it was his intention to cripple the resources of the armed force (at whatever risk of national defeat) in such a manner, that if, in their disorganized state, Dumouriez had attempted to move them towards Paris for ensuring the safety of Louis, he should find them unfit for such a march.[1] The army had no longer draught-horses for the artillery, and was in want of all with which a regular body of forces should be supplied. Dumouriez, according to his own account, both from the want of equipments of every kind, and from the manner in which the Jacobin commissioners had enfeebled the discipline of his troops, could not have moved towards Paris without losing the command of the army, and his head to boot, before he had got beyond the frontiers of Belgium.

Dumouriez had detached, however, according to his own statement, a considerable number of officers and confidential persons, to second any enterprise

[1] ["The peculation, or the profuse expenditure, at least, that took place in the war department during Pache's administration, was horrible. In the twenty-four hours that preceded his dismission, he filled up sixty different places with all the persons he knew of who were base enough to pay their court to him, down to his very hair-dresser, a blackguard boy of nineteen, whom he made a muster-master."—MAD. ROLAND, part i. p. 140.]

which he might find himself capable of undertaking in the King's behalf. While at Paris, he states that he treated with every faction in turn, attempting even to move Robespierre; and through means of his own intimate friend Gensonné,[1] he renewed his more natural connexions with the Girondists. But the one party were too determined on their bloody object to be diverted from it; the other, disconcerted in viewing the result of their timid and ambiguous attempt to carry through an appeal to the people, saw no further chance of saving the King's life otherwise than by the risk of their own, and chose rather to be executioners than victims.

Among the citizens of Paris, many of whom Dumouriez states himself to have urged with the argument, that the Convention, in assuming the power of judging the King, had exceeded the powers granted to them by the nation, he found hearers, not indeed uninterested or unmoved, but too lukewarm to promise efficient assistance. The citizens were in that state, in which an English poet has said of them,—

> "Cold burghers must be struck, and struck like flints,
> Ere their hid fire will sparkle."

With the natural sense of right and justice, they perceived what was expected of them; but felt not the less the trammels of their situation, and hesitated to incur the fury of a popular insurrection, which passiveness on their own part might postpone or avert. They listened to the general with interest, but without enthusiasm; implored him to

[1] [Born at Bourdeaux in 1758—he was involved in the fall of the Girondists, and guillotined 31st Oct. 1793.]

choose a less dangerous subject of conversation; and spoke of the power of the Jacobins, as of the influence of a tempest, which mortal efforts could not withstand. With one man of worth and confidence, Dumouriez pressed the conversation on the meanness of suffering the city to be governed by two or three thousand banditti, till the citizen looked on the ground and blushed, as he made the degrading confession,—"I see, citizen-general, to what conclusion your argument tends; but we are cowards, and the King MUST perish. What exertion of spirit can you expect from a city, which, having under arms eighty thousand well-trained militia, suffered themselves, notwithstanding, to be domineered over and disarmed by a comparative handful of rascally Federates from Brest and Marseilles?" The hint was sufficient. Dumouriez, who was involved in much personal danger, desisted from efforts, in which he could only compromise his own safety without ensuring that of the King. He affirms, that during twenty days' residence near Paris, he witnessed no effort, either public or private, to avert the King's fate; and that the only feelings which prevailed among the higher classes, were those of consternation and apathy.

It was then especially to be regretted, that an emigration, certainly premature, had drained the country of those fiery and gallant nobles, whose blood would have been so readily ventured in defence of the King. Five hundred men of high character and determined bravery would probably have been seconded by the whole burgher-force of Paris, and might have bid open defiance to the

Federates, or, by some sudden and bold attempt, snatched from their hands their intended victim. Five hundred—but five hundred—of those who were winning barren laurels under Condé, or, yet more unhappily, were subsisting on the charity of foreign nations, might at this moment, could they have been collected in Paris, have accomplished the purpose for which they themselves most desired to live, by saving the life of their unhappy sovereign. But although powerful reasons, and yet more aggrieved feelings, had recommended the emigration from that country, it operated like the common experiment of the Leyden phial, one side of which being charged with an uncommon quantity of the electrical fluid, has the effect of creating a deficiency of the same essence upon the other. In the interior of France, the spirit of loyalty was at the lowest ebb; because those upon whom it especially acted as a principle, were divided from the rest of the nation, to whom they would otherwise have afforded both encouragement and example.

The sacrifice, therefore, was to be made—made in spite of those who certainly composed the great majority of Paris, at least of such as were capable of reflection,—in spite of the commander of the army, Dumouriez,—in spite of the consciences of the Girondists, who, while they affected an air of republican stoicism, saw plainly, and were fully sensible of the great political error, the great moral sin, they were about to commit.

Undoubtedly they expected, that by joining in, or acquiescing in at least, if not authorizing, this

unnecessary and wanton cruelty, they should establish their character with the populace as firm and unshaken Republicans, who had not hesitated to sacrifice the King, since his life was demanded at the shrine of freedom. They were not long of learning, that they gained nothing by their mean-spirited acquiescence in a crime which their souls must have abhorred. All were sensible that the Girondists had been all along, notwithstanding their theoretical pretensions in favour of a popular government, lingering and looking back with some favour to the dethroned prince, to whose death they only consented in sheer coldness and cowardice of heart, because it required to be defended at some hazard to their own safety. The faults at once of duplicity and cowardice were thus fixed on this party; who, detested by the Royalists, and by all who in any degree harboured opinions favourable to monarchy, had their lives and offices sought after by the whole host of Jacobins in full cry, and that on account of faint-spirited wishes, which they had scarcely dared even to attempt to render efficient.

On the 21st of January, 1793,[1] Louis XVI. was

[1] ["At seven, the King said to me, 'You will give this seal to my son, this ring to the Queen, and assure her that it is with pain I part with it;—this little packet contains the hair of all my family, you will give her that too. Tell the Queen, my dear children, and my sister, that although I promised to see them again this morning, I have resolved to spare them the pangs of so cruel a separation; tell them how much it costs me to go without receiving their embraces once more!' He wiped away some tears; then added, in the most mournful accents, 'I charge you to bear them my last farewell.'"—CLERY, p. 249.

"On the morning of this terrible day, the princesses rose at

publicly beheaded in the midst of his own metropolis, in the *Place Louis Quinze*, erected to the memory of his grandfather. It is possible for the critical eye of the historian to discover much weakness in the conduct of this unhappy monarch; for he had neither the determination necessary to fight for his rights, nor the power of submitting with apparent indifference to circumstances, where resistance inferred danger. He submitted, indeed, but with so bad a grace, that he only made himself suspected of cowardice, without getting credit for voluntary concession. But yet his behaviour, on many trying occasions, effectually vindicated him from the charge of timidity, and showed that the unwillingness to shed blood, by which he was peculiarly distinguished, arose from benevolence, not from pusillanimity.

Upon the scaffold, he behaved with the firmness which became a noble spirit, and the patience beseeming one who was reconciled to Heaven. As one of the few marks of sympathy with which his sufferings were softened, the attendance of a confessor, who had not taken the constitutional oath, was permitted to the dethroned monarch. He who undertook the honourable but dangerous office, was a gentleman of the gifted family of Edgeworth of

six. The night before, the Queen had scarcely strength enough to put her son to bed. She threw herself, dressed as she was, upon her own bed, where she was heard shivering with cold and grief all night long. At a quarter past six, the door opened; the princesses believed that they were sent for to see the King, but it was only the officers looking for a prayer-book for the King's mass; they did not, however, abandon the hope of seeing him, till the shouts of joy of the unprincipled populace came to tell them that all was over."—DUCHESSE D'ANGOULEME, p. 52.]

Edgeworthstown; and the devoted zeal with which he rendered the last duties to Louis, had like in the issue to have proved fatal to himself.[1] As the instrument of death descended, the confessor pronounced the impressive words,—"Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven!"

There was a last will of Louis XVI. circulated upon good authority, bearing this remarkable passage:—"I recommend to my son, should he have the misfortune to become King, to recollect, that

[1] ["The procession from the Temple to the place of execution lasted nearly two hours. As soon as the carriage stopped, the King whispered to me, 'We are at the end of our journey, if I mistake not.' My silence answered that we were. One of the guards came to open the door, and the gens d'armes would have jumped out, but the King stopped them, and leaning his arm on my knee, 'Gentlemen,' said he, with the tone of majesty, 'I recommend to you this good man; take care that after my death no insult be offered to him—I charge you to prevent it.' As soon as the King had left the carriage, three guards surrounded him, and would have taken off his clothes, but he repulsed them with dignity; he undressed himself, untied his neckcloth, opened his shirt, and arranged it himself. The path leading to the scaffold was extremely rough, and from the slowness with which the King proceeded, I feared for a moment that his courage might be failing; but what was my astonishment, when, arrived at the last step, I felt him suddenly let go my arm, and saw him cross with a firm foot the breadth of the whole scaffold; he silenced, by his look alone, fifteen or twenty drums; and I heard him, in a loud voice, pronounce distinctly these memorable words, 'I die innocent of all the crimes laid to my charge; I pardon those who have occasioned my death; and I pray to God that the blood you are going to shed may never be visited on France.' He was proceeding, when a man on horseback, in the national uniform, (Santerre,) waved his sword, and ordered the drums to beat. Upon which, the executioners, seizing the King with violence, dragged him under the axe of the guillotine, which, with one stroke, severed his head from his body."—Abbe Edgeworth, *Last Hours of Louis XVI.* p. 84.]

his whole faculties are due to the service of the public; that he ought to consult the happiness of his people, by governing according to the laws, forgetting all injuries and misfortunes, and in particular those which I may have sustained. But, while I exhort him to govern under the authority of the laws, I cannot but add, that this will be only in his power, in so far as he shall be endowed with authority to cause right to be respected, and wrong punished; and that, without such authority, his situation in the government must be more hurtful than advantageous to the state." [1]

Not to mingle the fate of the illustrious victims of the royal family with the general tale of the sufferers under the Reign of Terror, we must here mention the deaths of the rest of that illustrious house, which closed for a time a monarchy, that, existing through three dynasties, had given sixty-six kings to France.

It was not to be supposed, that the Queen was to be long permitted to survive her husband. She had been even more than he the object of revolutionary detestation; nay, many were disposed to throw on Marie Antoinette, almost exclusively, the blame of those measures, which they considered as counter-revolutionary. She came to France a gay, young, and beautiful princess—she found in her husband a faithful, affectionate, almost a uxorious husband. In the early years of her reign she was guilty of two faults.

[1] ["The day after the execution, the municipality published the will, as a proof of the fanaticism and crimes of the King."—LACRETELLE, t. x. p. 254.]

In the first place, she dispensed too much with court-etiquette, and wished too often to enjoy a retirement and freedom, inconsistent with her high rank and the customs of the court. This was a great though natural mistake. The etiquette of a court places round the great personages whom it regards, a close and troublesome watch, but that very guard acts as a barrier against calumny; and when these formal witnesses are withdrawn, evil tongues are never wanting to supply with infamous reports a blank, which no testimony can be brought to fill up with the truth. No individual suffered more than Marie Antoinette from this species of slander, which imputed the most scandalous occupations to hours that were only meant to be stolen from form and from state, and devoted to the ease which crowned heads ought never to dream of enjoying.

Another natural, yet equally false step, was her interfering more frequently with politics than became her sex; exhibiting thus her power over the King, and at the same time lowering him in the eyes of his subjects, who, whatever be the auspices under which their own domestic affairs are conducted, are always scandalized if they see, or think they see, any thing like female influence directing the councils of their sovereigns. We are uncertain what degree of credit is to be given to the Memoirs of Bezenval, but we believe they approach near the truth in representing the Queen as desirous of having a party of her own, and carrying points in opposition to the ministers; and we know that a general belief of this sort was the first foun-

dation of the fatal report, that an Austrian cabal existed in the Court of France, under the direction of the Queen, which was supposed to sacrifice the interests of France to favour those of the Emperor of Germany.

The terms of her accusation were too basely depraved to be even hinted at here. She scorned to reply to it, but appealed to all who had been mothers, against the very possibility of the horrors which were stated against her.[1] The widow of a king, the sister of an emperor, was condemned to death, dragged in an open tumbril to the place of execution, and beheaded on the 16th October, 1793. She suffered death in her thirty-ninth year.[2]

The Princess Elizabeth, sister of Louis, of whom it might be said, in the words of Lord Clarendon, that she resembled a chapel in a king's palace, into which nothing but piety and morality enter, while all around is filled with sin, idleness, and folly, did not, by the most harmless demeanour and inoffensive character, escape the miserable fate in which the Jacobins had determined to involve the whole

[1] [" Si je n'ai pas répondu, c'est que la nature se refuse à répondre à une pareille inculpation faite à une mère." (Ici l'accusée paroit vivement émue,) " J'en appelle à toutes celles qui peuvent se trouver ici."—*Procès de Marie Antoinette*, p. 29.]

[2] [" Sorrow had blanched her once beautiful hair; but her features and air still commanded the admiration of all who beheld her. Her cheeks, pale and emaciated, were occasionally tinged with a vivid colour at the mention of those she had lost. When led out to execution, she was dressed in white; she had cut off her hair with her own hands. Placed in a tumbril, with her arms tied behind her, she was taken by a circuitous route to the Place de la Révolution, and she ascended the scaffold with a firm and dignified step, as if she had been about to take her place on a throne, by the side of her husband."—LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 261.]

family of Louis XVI. Part of the accusation redounded to the honour of her character. She was accused of having admitted to the apartments of the Tuileries some of the national guards, of the section of Filles de Saint Thomas, and causing the wounds to be looked to which they had received in a skirmish with the Marseillois, immediately before the 10th of August. The princess admitted her having done so, and it was exactly in consistence with her whole conduct. Another charge stated the ridiculous accusation, that she had distributed bullets chewed by herself and her attendants, to render them more fatal, to the defenders of the castle of the Tuileries; a ridiculous fable, of which there was no proof whatever. She was beheaded in May, 1794, and met her death as became the manner in which her life had been spent.[1]

We are weary of recounting these atrocities, as others must be of reading them. Yet it is not useless that men should see how far human nature can be carried, in contradiction to every feeling the most sacred, to every pleading whether of justice or of humanity The Dauphin we have already described as a promising child of seven

[1] ["Madame Elizabeth was condemned, with many other individuals of rank. When on the tumbril, she declared that Madame de Serilli, one of the victims, had disclosed to her that she was pregnant, and was thus the means of saving her life."—LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 424.

"The assassination of the Queen and of Madame Elizabeth excited perhaps still more astonishment and horror than the crime which had been perpetrated against the person of the King; for no other object could be assigned for these horrible enormities, than the very terror which they were fitted to inspire."—DE STAEL, v. ii. p. 125.]

years old, an age at which no offence could have been given, and from which no danger could have been apprehended. Nevertheless, it was resolved to destroy the innocent child, and by means to which ordinary murders seem deeds of mercy.

The unhappy boy was put in charge of the most hard-hearted villain whom the Community of Paris, well acquainted where such agents were to be found, were able to select from their band of Jacobins. This wretch, a shoemaker called Simon, asked his employers "What was to be done with the young wolf-whelp; was he to be slain?"—"No."—"Poisoned?"—"No."—"Starved to death?"—"No."—"What then?"—"He was to be got rid of."[1] Accordingly, by a continuance of the most severe treatment; by beating, cold, vigils, fasts, and ill usage of every kind, so frail a blossom was soon blighted. He died on the 8th of June, 1795.[2]

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 233.]

[2] ["Simon had had the cruelty to leave the poor child absolutely alone. Unexampled barbarity! to leave an unhappy and sickly infant of eight years old, in a great room, locked and bolted in, with no other resource than a broken bell, which he never rang, so greatly did he dread the people whom its sound would have brought to him; he preferred wanting any thing and every thing to the sight of his persecutors. His bed had not been touched for six months, and he had not strength to make it himself; it was alive with bugs, and vermin still more disgusting. His linen and his person were covered with them. For more than a year he had had no change of shirt or stockings; every kind of filth was allowed to accumulate about him, and in his room; and during all that period, nothing of that kind had been removed. His window, which was locked as well as grated, was never opened; and the infectious smell of this horrid room was so dreadful, that no one could bear it for a moment. He passed his

After this last horrible crime, there was a relaxation in favour of the daughter, and now the sole child, of this unhappy house. The princess royal, whose qualities have since honoured even her birth and blood, experienced, from this period, a mitigated captivity. Finally, on the 19th December, 1795, this last remaining relic of the family of Louis was permitted to leave her prison and her country, in exchange for La Fayette and others, whom, on that condition, Austria delivered from captivity. She became afterwards the wife of her cousin the Duke d'Angoulême, eldest son of the reigning monarch of France, and obtained, by the manner in which she conducted herself at Bourdeaux in 1815, the highest praise for gallantry and spirit.

days without any kind of occupation. They did not even allow him light in the evening. This situation affected his mind as well as his body; and it is not surprising that he should have fallen into a frightful atrophy."—DUCHESSE D'ANGOULEME, p. 109.]

CHAPTER XIV.

Dumouriez—His displeasure at the Treatment of the Flemish Provinces by the Convention—His projects in consequence—Gains the ill-will of his Army—and is forced to fly to the Austrian Camp—Lives many years in retreat, and finally dies in England.—Struggles betwixt the Girondists and Jacobins.—Robespierre impeaches the Leaders of the Girondists—and is denounced by them.—Decree of Accusation against Marat—Commission of Twelve—Marat acquitted.—Terror of the Girondists.—Jacobins prepare to attack the Palais Royal, but are repulsed—Repair to the Convention, who recall the Commission of Twelve.—Louvet and other Girondist Leaders fly from Paris.—Convention go forth in procession to expostulate with the People—Forced back to their Hall, and compelled to Decree the Accusation of Thirty of their Body.—Girondists finally ruined—and their principal Leaders perish—Close of their History.

WHILE the Republic was thus indulging the full tyranny of irresistible success over the remains of the royal family, it seemed about to sustain a severe shock from one of its own children, who had arisen to eminence by its paths. This was Dumouriez, whom we left victor at Jemappes, and conqueror, in consequence, of the Flemish provinces. These fair possessions, the Convention, without a moment's hesitation, annexed to the dominions of France; and proceeded to pour down

upon them their tax-gatherers, commissaries, and every other denomination of spoilers, who not only robbed without ceremony the unfortunate inhabitants, but insulted their religion by pillaging and defacing their churches, set their laws and privileges at contempt, and tyrannized over them in the very manner, which had so recently induced the Flemings to offer resistance to their own hereditary princes of the House of Austria.

Dumouriez, naturally proud of his conquest, felt for those who had surrendered to his arms upon assurance of being well treated, and was sensible that his own honour and influence were aimed at; and that it was the object of the Convention to make use of his abilities only as their implements, and to keep his army in a state of complete dependence upon themselves.

The general, on the contrary, had the ambition as well as the talents of a conqueror: he considered his army as the means of attaining the victories, which, without him, it could not have achieved, and he desired to retain it under his own immediate command, as a combatant wishes to keep hold of the sword which he has wielded with success. He accounted himself strongly possessed of the hearts of his soldiers, and therefore thought himself qualified to play the part of military umpire in the divisions of the state, which La Fayette had attempted in vain; and it was with this view, doubtless, that he undertook that expedition to Paris, in which he vainly attempted a mediation in behalf of the King.

After leaving Paris, Dumouriez seems to have

abandoned Louis personally to his fate, yet still retaining hopes to curb the headlong course of the Revolution.

Two plans presented themselves to his fertile invention, nor can it be known with certainty to which of them he most inclined. He may have entertained the idea of prevailing upon the army to decide for the youthful Dauphin to be their Constitutional King; or, as many have thought, it may better have suited his personal views to have recommended to the throne a gallant young prince of the blood, who had distinguished himself in his army, the eldest son of the miserable Duke of Orleans.[1] Such a change of dynasty might be supposed to limit the wishes of the proposed sovereign to that share of power intrusted to him by the Revolution, since he would have had no title to the crown save what arose from the Constitution. But, to qualify himself in either case to act as the supreme head of the army, independent of the National Convention, it was necessary that Dumouriez should pursue his conquests, act upon the plan laid down by the ministers at Paris, and in addition to his title of victor in Belgium, add that of conqueror of Holland. He commenced, accordingly, an invasion of the latter country, with some prospect of success But though he took Gertruydenberg, and blockaded Bergen-op-Zoom, he was repulsed from Williamstadt; and at the same time he received information that an army of

[1] [Louis-Phillippe, of Orleans, chosen King of the French at the Revolution of July 1830.]

Austrians, under the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, a general of eminence, though belonging to the old military school of Germany, was advancing into Flanders. Dumouriez retreated from Holland to make a stand against these new enemies, and was again unfortunate. The French were defeated at Aix-la-Chapelle, and their new levies almost entirely dispersed. Chagrined with this disaster, Dumouriez gave an imprudent loose to the warmth of his temper. Following the false step of La Fayette, in menacing before he was prepared to strike, he wrote a letter to the Convention, threatening the Jacobin party with the indignation of his army. This was on the 12th March, 1793, and six days afterwards he was again defeated in the battle of Neerwinden.[1]

It must have been extremely doubtful, whether, in the very pitch of victory, Dumouriez possessed enough of individual influence over his army, to have inclined them to declare against the National Convention. The forces which he commanded were not to be regarded in the light of a regular army, long embodied, and engaged perhaps for years in difficult enterprises, and in foreign countries, where such a force exists as a community only by their military relations to each other; where the common soldiers knew no other home than their tents, and no other direction than the voice of their officers; and the officers no other laws than the pleasure of the general. Such armies, holding themselves independent of the civil authorities of their country,

[1] [Dumouriez, v. ii. p. 287; Toulongeon, t. iii. p. 293; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 284.]

came at length, through the habit of long wars and distant conquests, to exist in the French empire, and upon such rested the foundation-stone of the imperial throne; but as yet, the troops of the Republic consisted either of the regiments revolutionised, when the great change had offered commissions to privates, and batons to subalterns,—or of new levies, who had their very existence through the Revolution, and whose common nickname of Carmagnols,[1] expressed their Republican origin and opinions. Such troops might obey the voice of the general on the actual field of battle, but were not very amenable even to the ordinary course of discipline elsewhere, and were not likely to exchange their rooted political principles, with all the ideas of license connected with them, at Dumouriez's word of command, as they would have changed their front, or have adopted any routine military movement. Still less were they likely implicitly to obey this commander, when the *prestige* of his fortune seemed in the act of abandoning him, and least of all, when they found him disposed to make a compromise with the very foe who had defeated him, and perceived that he negotiated, by abandoning his conquests to the Austrians, to purchase the opportunity or permission of executing the counter-revolution which he proposed.

Nevertheless, Dumouriez, either pushed on by

[1] [Carmagnol was the name applied in the early period of the Revolution to a certain dance, and the song connected with it It was afterwards given to the French soldiers who first engaged in the cause of Republicanism, and who wore a dress of a peculiar cut.]

an active and sanguine temper, or being too far advanced to retreat, endeavoured, by intrigues in his own army, and an understanding with the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, to render himself strong enough to overset the reigning party in the Convention, and restore, with some modifications, the Constitution of 1791. He expressed this purpose with imprudent openness. Several generals of division declared against his scheme. He failed in obtaining possession of the fortresses of Lisle, Valenciennes, and Condé. Another act of imprudence aggravated the unpopularity into which he began to fall with his army. Four commissioners of the Convention[1] remonstrated publicly on the course he was pursuing. Dumouriez, not contented with arresting them, had the imprudence to send them to the camp of the Austrians prisoners, thus delivering up to the public enemy the representatives of the government under which he was appointed, and for which he had hitherto acted, and proclaiming his alliance with the invaders whom he was commissioned to oppose.

All this rash conduct disunited the tie between Dumouriez and his army. The resistance to his authority became general, and finally, it was with great difficulty and danger that he made his escape to the Austrian camp, with his young friend the Duke de Chartres.[2]

[1] [Camus, Quinette, Bancal, and Lamarque.]

[2] [Thiers, t. iv. p. 118; Toulongeon, t. iii. p. 316; Mignet, t. i. p. 258. Shortly after the flight of Dumouriez, the French army was placed by the Convention under the command of General Dampierre.]

All that this able and ambitious man saved in his retreat was merely his life, of which he spent some years afterwards in Germany, concluding it in England, a few years ago, without again making any figure in the political horizon.[1] Thus, the attempt of Dumouriez, to use military force to stem the progress of the Revolution, failed, like that of La Fayette, some months before. To use a medical simile, the imposthume, was not yet far enough advanced, and sufficiently come to a head, to be benefited by the use of the lancet.

Meanwhile, the Convention, though triumphant over the schemes of the revolted general, was divided by the two parties to whom its walls served for an arena, in which to aim against each other the most deadly blows. It was now manifest that the strife must end tragically for one of the parties, and all circumstances pointed out the Girondists as the victims. They had indeed still the command of majorities in the Convention, especially when the votes were taken by scrutiny or ballot; on which occasions the feebler deputies of the Plain could give their voice according to their consciences, without its being known that they had done so. But in open debate, and when the members voted *vivâ voce*, amongst the intimidating cries and threats of tribunes filled by an infuriated audience, the spirit of truth and justice seemed too nearly allied to that of martyrdom, to be prevalent generally

[1] Dumouriez was a man of pleasing manners and lively conversation. He lived in retirement latterly at Turville Park, near Henley upon Thames, and died March 14, 1823, in his eighty-fifth year.

amongst men who made their own safety the rule of their own political conduct. The party, however, continued for several months to exercise the duties of administration, and to make such a struggle in the Convention as could be achieved by oratory and reasoning, against underhand intrigue, supported by violent declamation, and which was, upon the least signal, sure of the aid of actual brutal violence.

The Girondists, we have seen, had aimed decrees of the Assembly at the triumvirate, and a plot was now laid among the Jacobins, to repay that intended distinction by the actual strokes of the axe, or, failing that, of the dagger.

When the news of Dumouriez's defection arrived, the Jacobins, always alert in prepossessing the public mind, held out the Girondists as the associates of the revolted general. It was on them that they directed the public animosity, great and furious in proportion to the nature of the crisis. That majority of the Convention, which the traitor Dumouriez affirmed was sound, and with which he acted in concert, intimated, according to the Jacobins, the Girondists the allies of his treasons. They called out in the Convention, on the 8th of March, for a tribunal of judgment fit to decide on such crimes, without the delays arising from ordinary forms of pleading and evidence, and without even the intervention of a jury. The Girondists opposed this measure, and the debate was violent. In the course of the subsequent days, an insurrection of the people was prepared by the Jacobins, as upon the 20th June and 10th of August. It ought to have broken out upon the 10th of March, which was the day

destined to put an end to the ministerial party by a general massacre. But the Girondists received early intelligence of what was intended, and absented themselves from the Convention on the day of peril. A body of Federates from Brest, about four hundred strong, were also detached in their favour by Kevelegan, one of the deputies from the ancient province of Bretagne, and who was a zealous Girondist. The precaution, however slight, was sufficient for the time. The men who were prepared to murder, were unwilling to fight, however strong the odds on their side; and the mustering of the Jacobin bravoes proved, on this occasion, an empty menace.

Duly improved, a discovered conspiracy is generally of advantage to the party against which it was framed. But Vergniaud, when in a subsequent sitting he denounced to the Convention the existence of a conspiracy to put to death a number of the deputies, was contented to impute it to the influence of the aristocracy, of the nobles, the priests, and the emissaries of Pitt and Coburg; thus suffering the Jacobins to escape every imputation of that blame, which all the world knew attached to them, and to them only. He was loudly applauded. Marat, who rose after him, was applauded as loudly, and the Revolutionary Tribunal was established.[1]

Louvet, who exclaims against Vergniaud for his pusillanimity, says, that the orator alleged in his

[1] [Thiers, t. iv. p. 66; Mignet, t. i. p. 248; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 311.]

excuse, "the danger of incensing violent men, already capable of all excesses." They had come to the boar-chase, they had roused him and provoked his anger, and now they felt, too late, that they lacked weapons with which to attack the irritated monster. The plot of the 10th March had been compared to that of the Catholics on the 5th November, in England. It had been described in the *Moniteur* as a horrible conspiracy, by which a company of ruffians, assuming the title of *de la Glacière*, in remembrance of the massacre of Avignon, surrounded the hall for two days, with the purpose of dissolving the National Convention by force, and putting to death a great proportion of the deputies. Yet the Convention passed over, without effective prosecution of any kind, a crime of so enormous a die; and in doing so, showed themselves more afraid of immediate personal consequences, than desirous of seizing an opportunity to rid France of the horrible faction by whom they were scourged and menaced.

In the midst of next month the Jacobins became the assailants, proud, it may be supposed, of the impunity under which they had been sheltered. Robespierre impeached by name the leaders of the Girondists, as accomplices of Dumouriez. But it was not in the Convention where Robespierre's force lay. Gaudet, with great eloquence, repelled the charge, and in his turn denounced Robespierre and the Jacobins. He proclaimed to the Convention, that they sat and debated under raised sabres and poniards, which a moment's signal could

let loose on them; and he read from the journal conducted by Marat,[1] an appeal, calling on the people to rise in insurrection. Fear and shame gave the Convention momentary courage. They passed a decree of accusation against Marat, who was obliged to conceal himself for a few days.[2]

Buzot, it may be remarked, censures this decree against Marat as impolitic, seeing it was the first innovation affecting the inviolability of the persons of the deputies. In point of principle, he is certainly right; but as to any practical effects resulting from this breach of privilege, by reprisals on the other side, we are quite sceptical. Whatever violence was done to the Girondists, at the end of the conflict, was sure to have befallen them, whether Marat had been arrested or not. Precedents were as useless to such men, as a vizard to one of their ruffians. Both could do their business barefaced.

The Convention went farther than the decree of accusation against Marat; and for the first time showed their intention to make a stand against the Jacobins. On the motion of Barrère, they nominated a commission of twelve members, some Girondists, some neutrals, to watch over and repress the movements of such citizens as should seem disposed to favour anarchy.[3]

The Convention were not long of learning the character of the opposition which they had now defied. Pache, Mayor of Paris, and one of the

[1] [L'Ami du Peuple.]

[2] [Mignet, t. i. p. 259; Thiers, t. iv. p. 145; Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 9; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 332.]

[3] [Mignet, t. i. p. 261; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 346.]

worst men of the Revolution, appeared at the bar of the Convention with two thousand petitioners, as they were called. They demanded, in the name of the sections, the arrest of twenty-two of the most distinguished of the Girondist leaders. The Convention got rid of the petition by passing to the order of the day. But the courage of the anarchists was greatly increased; and they saw that they had only to bear down with repeated attacks an enemy who had no fortification save the frail defences of the law, which it was the pride of the Jacobins to surmount and to defy. Their demand of proscription against these unfortunate deputies was a measure from which they never departed; and their audacity in urging it placed that party on the defensive, who ought, in all reason, to have been active in the attack.

The Girondists, however, felt the extremity to which they were reduced, and sensible of the great advantage to be attained by being the assailants in such a struggle, they endeavoured to regain the offensive.

The Revolutionary Tribunal to which Marat had been sent by the decree of accusation, knew their business too well to convict any one, much less such a distinguished patriot, who was only accused of stimulating the people to exercise the sacred right of insurrection. He was honourably acquitted, after scarcely the semblance of a trial, and brought back to his place in the Convention, crowned with a civic coronet, and accompanied by a band of such determined ruffians as were worthy to form his body-guard. They insisted on filing through the

hall, while a huge pioneer, their spokesman, assured the Convention that the people loved Marat, and that the cause of Marat and the people would always be the same.[1]

Meanwhile, the committee of twelve proceeded against the Terrorists with some vigour. One of the most furious provokers of insurrection and murder was Hébert, a devoted Jacobin, substitute of the Procureur Syndic of the Community.[2] Speaking to this body, who now exercised the whole powers of magistracy in Paris, this man had not blushed to demand the heads of three hundred deputies. He was arrested and committed to prison.

This decisive action ought in policy to have been followed by other steps equally firm. The Girondists, by displaying confidence, might surely have united to themselves a large number of the neutral party; and might have established an interest in the sections of Paris, consisting of men, who, though timid without leaders, held in deep horror the revolutionary faction, and trembled for their families and their property, if put under the guardianship, as it had been delicately expressed, of the rabble of the fauxbourgs. The very show of four hundred Bretons had disconcerted the whole conspiracy of the 10th of March; and therefore, with a moderate support of determined men, statesmen of a more

[1] [Thiers, t. iv. p. 151; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 343.]

[2] [Hébert was also editor of an obscene and revolting revolutionary journal, entitled the "Père Duchêsne," which had obtained an immense circulation.]

resolute and practised character than these theoretical philosophers, might have bid defiance to the mere mob of Paris, aided by a few hundreds of hired ruffians. At the worst they would have perished in attempting to save their country from the most vile and horrible tyranny.

The Girondists, however, sat in the Convention, like wild-fowl when the hawk is abroad, afraid either to remain where they were, or to attempt a flight. Yet, as they could make no armed interest in Paris, there was much to induce them to quit the metropolis, and seek a place of free deliberation elsewhere. France, indeed, was in such a state, that had these unfortunate experimentalists possessed any influence in almost any department, they could hardly have failed to bring friends around them, if they had effected a retreat to it. Versailles seems to have been thought of as the scene of their adjournment, by those who nourished such an idea; and it was believed that the inhabitants of that town, repentant of the part they had played in driving from them the royal family and the legislative body, would have stood in their defence. But neither from the public journals and histories of the time, nor from the private memoirs of Buzot, Barbaroux, or Louvet, does it appear that these infatuated philosophers thought either of flight or defence. They appear to have resembled the wretched animal, whose chance of escape from its enemies rests only in the pitiful cries which it utters when seized. Their whole system was a castle in the air, and when it vanished they could only sit down and lament over it. On the other

hand, it must be allowed to the Girondists, that the inefficiency and imbecility of their conduct was not to be attributed to personal cowardice. Enthusiasts in their political opinions, they saw their ruin approaching, waited for it, and dared it; but like that of the monarch they had been so eager to dethrone, and by dethroning whom they had made way for their own ruin, their resolution was of a passive, not an active character; patient and steady to endure wrong, but inefficient where the object was to do right towards themselves and France.

For many nights these unhappy and devoted deputies, still possessed of the ministerial power, were so far from being able to ensure their own safety, or that of the country under their nominal government, that they had shifted about from one place of rendezvous to another, not daring to occupy their own lodgings, and usually remaining, three or four together, armed for defence of their lives, in such places of secrecy and safety as they could devise.

It was on the night preceding the 30th of May, that Louvet, with five of the most distinguished of the Girondist party, had absconded into such a retreat, more like robbers afraid of the police than legislators, when the tocsin was rung at dead of night. Rabaud de Saint Etienne, a Protestant clergyman, and one of the most distinguished of the party for humanity and resolution, received it as a death-knell, and continued to repeat, *Illa suprema dies.*

The alarm was designed to raise the suburbs; but in this task the Jacobins do not seem to have

had the usual facilities—at least they began by putting their bloodhounds on a scent, upon which they thought them likely to run more readily than the mere murder or arrest of twenty or thirty deputies of the Convention. They devised one which suited admirably, both to alarm the wealthier citizens, and teach them to be contented with looking to their own safety, and to animate the rabble with the hope of plunder. The rumour was spread, that the section of La Butte-des-Moulins, comprehending the Palais Royal, and the most wealthy shops in Paris, had become counter-revolutionary—had displayed the white cockade, and were declaring for the Bourbons.

Of this not a word was true. The citizens of the Palais Royal were disposed perhaps to royalty —certainly for a quiet and established government —but loved their own shops much better than the House of Bourbon, and had no intention of placing them in jeopardy either for king or kaisar. They heard with alarm the accusation against them, mustered in defence of their property, shut the gates of the Palais Royal, which admits of being strongly defended, turned cannon with lighted matches upon the mob as they approached their precincts, and showed, in a way sufficient to intimidate the rabble of Saint Antoine, that though the wealthy burgesses of Paris might abandon to the mob the care of killing kings and changing ministers, they had no intention whatever to yield up to them the charge of their counters and tills. Five sections were under arms and ready to act. Not one of the Girondist party seems to have even

attempted to point out to them, that by an exertion to preserve the independence of the Convention, they might rid themselves for ever of the domination, under which all who had property, feeling, or education, were rendered slaves by these recurring insurrections. This is the more extraordinary, as Raffé, the commandant of the section of La Butte-des-Moulins, had actually marched to the assistance of the Convention on the 10th of March, then, as now, besieged by an armed force.

Left to themselves, the sections who were in arms to protect order, thought it enough to provide against the main danger of the moment. The sight of their array, and of their determined appearance, far more than their three-coloured cockades, and cries of " Vive la Republique," were sufficient to make the insurgents recognise those as good citizens, who could not be convicted of *incivism* without a bloody combat.

They were, however, at length made to comprehend by their leaders, that the business to be done lay in the Hall of the Convention, and that the exertions of each active citizen were to entitle him to forty *sous* for the day's work. In the whole affair there was so much of cold trick, and so little popular enthusiasm, that it is difficult to believe that the plotters might not have been countermined and blown to the moon with their own petard, had there been active spirit or practical courage on the side of those who were the assailed party. But we see no symptoms of either. The Convention were surrounded by the rabble, and menaced in the grossest terms. Under the general terror in-

spired by their situation, they finally recalled the Commission of Twelve, and set Hébert at liberty; —concessions which, though short of those which the Jacobins had determined to insist upon, were such as showed that the power of the Girondists was entirely destroyed, and that the Convention itself might be overawed at the pleasure of whoever should command the mob of Paris.[1]

The Jacobins were now determined to follow up their blow, by destroying the enemy whom they had disarmed. The 2d of June was fixed for this purpose. Louvet, and some others of the Girondist party, did not choose to await the issue, but fled from Paris. To secure the rest of the devoted party, the barriers of the city were shut.

On this decisive occasion the Jacobins had not trusted entirely to the efficiency of their suburb forces. They had also under their orders about two thousand Federates, who were encamped in the Champs Elysées, and had been long tutored in the part they had to act. They harnessed guns and howitzers, prepared grape-shot and shells, and actually heated shot red-hot, as if their purpose had been to attack some strong fortress, instead of a hall filled with the unarmed representatives of the people. Henriot, commander-general of the armed force of Paris, a fierce, ignorant man, entirely devoted to the Jacobin interest, took care, in posting the armed force which arrived from all hands around the Convention, to station those nearest to the legislative body, whose dispositions with regard to

[1] [Thiers, t. iv. p. 251; Toulongeon, t. iii. p. 414; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 356.]

them were most notoriously violent. They were thus entirely surrounded as if in a net, and the Jacobins had little more to do than to select their victims.

The universal cry of the armed men who surrounded the Convention, was for a decree of death or outlawry against twenty-two members of the Girondist party, who had been pointed out, by the petition of Pache, and by subsequent petitions of the most inflammatory nature, as accomplices of Dumouries, enemies of the good city of Paris, and traitors who meditated a federative instead of an indivisible republic. This list of proscription included the ministers.

The Convention were in a dreadful situation; it was manifest that the arm of strong force was upon them. Those who were supposed to belong to the Girondist party, were struck and abused as they entered the hall, hooted and threatened as they arose to deliver their opinion. The members were no longer free to speak or vote. There could be no deliberation within the Assembly, while such a scene of tumult and fury continued and increased without.

Barrère, leader, as we have said, of the Plain, or neutral party, who thought with the Girondists in conscience, and acted with the Jacobins in fear, proposed one of those seemingly moderate measures, which involve as sure destruction to those who adopt them, as if their character were more decisively hostile. With compliments to their good intentions, with lamentations for the emergency, he entreated the proscribed Girondists to

sacrifice themselves as the unhappy subjects of disunion in the Republic, and to resign their character of deputies. The Convention, he said, "would then declare them under the protection of the law," —as if they were not invested with that protection while they were convicted of no crime, and clothed at the same time with the inviolability, of which he advised them to divest themselves. It was as if a man were requested to lay aside his armour, on the promise that the ordinary garments which he wore under it should be rendered impenetrable.

But a Frenchman is easily induced to do that to which he is provoked, as involving a point of honour. This treacherous advice was adopted by Isnard, Dussaux, and others of the proscribed deputies, who were thus persuaded to abandon what defences remained to them, in hopes to soften the ferocity of an enemy, too inveterate to entertain feelings of generosity.

Lanjuinais maintained a more honourable struggle. "Expect not from me," he said to the Convention, "to hear either of submission, or resignation of my official character. Am I free to offer such a resignation, or are you free to receive it?" As he would have turned his eloquence against Robespierre and the Jacobins, an attempt was made by Legendre and Chabot to drag him from the tribune. While he resisted he received several blows. "Cruel men!" he exclaimed—"The Heathens adorned and caressed the victims whom they led to the slaughter—you load them with blows and insult."

Shame procured him a moment's hearing, during

which he harangued the Assembly with much effect on the baseness, treachery, cruelty, and impolicy, of thus surrendering their brethren to the call of a bloodthirsty multitude from without, stimulated by a vengeful minority of their own members. The Convention made an effort to free themselves from the toils in which they were entangled. They resolved to go out in a body, and ascertain what respect would be paid to their persons by the armed force assembled around them.

They sallied forth accordingly, in procession, into the gardens of the Tuileries, the Jacobins alone remaining in the hall; but their progress was presently arrested by Henriot, at the head of a strong military staff, and a large body of troops. Every passage leading from the gardens was secured by soldiers. The president read the decree of the Assembly, and commanded Henriot's obedience. The commandant of Paris only replied by reining back his horse, and commanding the troops to stand to their arms. "Return to your posts," he said to the terrified legislators; "the people demand the traitors who are in the bosom of your assembly, and will not depart till their will is accomplished." Marat came up presently afterwards at the head of a select band of a hundred ruffians. He called on the multitude to stand firm to their purpose, and commanded the Convention, in the name of the people, to return to their place of meeting, to deliberate, and, above all, to obey.[1]

The Convention re-entered their hall in the last

[1] [Thiers, t. iv. p. 270; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 375; Mignet, t. i. p. 272.

degree of consternation, prepared to submit to the infamy which now seemed inevitable, yet loathing themselves for their cowardice, even while obeying the dictates of self-preservation. The Jacobins meanwhile enhanced their demand, like her who sold the books of the Sibyls. Instead of twenty-two deputies, the accusation of thirty was now demanded. Amid terror mingled with acclamations, the decree was declared to be carried. This doom of proscription passed on the motion of Couthon; a decrepid being whose lower extremities were paralysed,—whose benevolence of feeling seemed to pour itself out in the most gentle expressions, uttered in the most melodious tones,—whose sensibility led him constantly to foster a favourite spaniel in his bosom, that he might have something on which to bestow kindness and caresses,—but who was at heart as fierce as Danton, and as pitiless as Robespierre.

Great part of the Convention did not join in this vote, protesting loudly against the force imposed on them. Several of the proscribed deputies were arrested, others escaped from the hall by the connivance of their brethren, and of the official persons attached to the Convention, some, foreseeing their fate, had absented themselves from the meeting, and were already fled from Paris.

Thus fell, without a blow struck, or sword drawn in their defence, the party in the Convention which claimed the praise of acting upon pure Republican principles—who had overthrown the throne, and led the way to anarchy, merely to perfect an ideal theory. They fell, as the wisest of them admitted,

dupes to their own system, and to the vain and impracticable idea of ruling a large and corrupt empire, by the motives which may sway a small and virtuous community. They might, as they too late discovered, have as well attempted to found the Capitol on a bottomless and quaking marsh, as their pretended Republic in a country like France. The violent revolutionary expedients, the means by which they acted, were turned against them by men, whose ends were worse than their own. The Girondists had gloried in their share of the triumphs of the 10th of August; yet what was that celebrated day, save an insurrection of the populace against the constituted authority of the time, as those of the 31st of May, and 2d of June, 1793, under which the Girondists succumbed, were directed against them as successors in the government? In the one case, a king was dethroned; in the other, a government, or band of ministers dismissed. And if the people had a right, as the Girondists claimed in their behalf, to act as the executioners of their own will in the one instance, it is difficult to see upon what principle their power should be trammelled in the other.

In the important process against the King, the Girondists had shown themselves pusillanimous;—desirous to save the life of a guiltless man, they dared not boldly vouch his innocence, but sheltered themselves under evasions which sacrificed his character, while they could not protect his life. After committing this great error, they lost every chance of rallying with efficacy under their standard what might remain of well-intentioned individuals in

Paris and in France, who, if they had seen the Girondists, when in power, conduct themselves with firmness, would probably rather have ranked themselves in the train of men who were friends to social order, however republican their tenets, than have given way to the anarchy which was doomed to ensue.[1]

Upon all their own faults, whether of act or of omission, the unfortunate Girondists had now ample time to meditate. Twenty-two of their leading members, arrested on the fatal 2d of June, already waited their doom in prison, while the others wandered on, in distress and misery, through the different departments of France.

The fate of those who were prisoners was not very long suspended. In October they were brought to trial, and convicted of *royalism!* Such was the temper of France at the time, and so gross the impositions which might be put upon the people, that the men in the empire, who, upon abstract principle, were most averse to monarchy, and who had sacrificed even their consciences to join with the Jacobins in pulling down the throne, were now accused and convicted of being Royalists; and that at a time when what remained of the royal family was at so low an ebb, that the imprisoned Queen

[1] ["The Girondists felt without doubt, at the bottom of their hearts, a keen remorse for the means which they had employed to overturn the throne; and when those very means were directed against themselves, when they recognised their own weapons in the wounds which they received, they must have reflected without doubt on that rapid justice of revolutions, which concentrates on a few instants the events of several ages."—De Stael, v. ii. p. 122.]

could not obtain the most ordinary book for the use of her son, without a direct and formal application to the Community of Paris.[1]

When the Girondists were brought before the tribunal, the people seem to have shown more interest in men, whose distinguished talents had so often swayed the legislative body, than was altogether acceptable to the Jacobins, who were induced to fear some difficulty in carrying through their conviction. They obtained a decree from the Convention, declaring that the president of the Revolutionary Tribunal should be at liberty to close the procedure so soon as the jury should have made up their minds, and without hearing the accused in their defence.[2] This frightful expedient of cutting short the debate, (*couper la parole* was the phrase,) was often resorted to on those revolutionary trials. Unquestionably, they dreaded the reasoning of Brissot, and the eloquence of Vergniaud, of which they had so long and so often experienced the thunders. One crime,—and it was a fatal offence, considering before what judicature they stood,—seems to have been made out by Brissot's own letters. It was that by which the late members attempted to effect a combination among the departments, for the purpose of counterpoising, if possible, the tremendous influence which the capital and the revolutionary part of its magistracy

[1] Witness the following entry in the minutes of the *Commune*, on a day, be it remarked, betwixt the 29th May and the 2d June: "Antoinette fait demander pour son fils le roman de Gil Blas de Santillane—Accordé."

[2] [Toulongeon, t. iv. p. 114; Thiers, t. iv. p. 389.]

exercised over the Convention, whom Paris detained prisoners within her walls. This delinquency alone was well calculated to remove all scruples from the minds of a jury, selected from that very class of Parisians, whose dreadful importance would have been altogether annihilated by the success of such a scheme. The accused were found guilty, as conspirators against the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, and the liberty and safety of the French people.

When the sentence of death was pronounced, one of their number, Valazé, plunged a dagger in his bosom.[1] The rest suffered in terms of the sentence, and were conveyed to the place of execution in the same tumbril with the bloody corpse of their suicide colleague. Brissot seemed downcast and unhappy. Fauchet, a renegade priest, showed signs of remorse. The rest affected a Roman resolution, and went to execution singing a parody on the hymn of the Marseillois, in which that famous composition was turned against the Jacobins.[2] They had long rejected the aids of religion, which, early received and cherished, would have guided their steps in prosperity, and sustained them in adversity. Their remaining stay was only that of the same vain and speculative philoso-

[1] ["The court immediately ordered that his dead body should be borne on a car to the place of execution, and beheaded with the other prisoners."—LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 269.]

[2] ["Allons, enfans de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé;
Contre nous, de la tyrannie
Le couteau sanglant est levé."
LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 270.]

phy, which had so deplorably influenced their political conduct.

Those members of the Girondist party, who, escaping from Paris to the departments, avoided their fate somewhat longer, saw little reason to pride themselves on the political part they had chosen to act. They found the eastern and southern departments in a ferment against Paris and the Jacobins, and ready to rise in arms; but they became aware, at the same time, that no one was thinking of or regretting their system of a pure republic, the motives by which the malecontents were agitated being of a very different, and far more practical character. Great part of the nation, all at least of better feelings, had been deeply affected by the undeserved fate of the King, and the cruelty with which his family had been, and were still treated. The rich feared to be pillaged and murdered by the Jacobins; the poor suffered no less under scarcity of grain, under the depreciation of assignats, and a compulsory levy of no less than three hundred thousand men over France, to supply the enormous losses of the French army. But every where the insurrections took a Royalist, and not a Republican character; and although the Girondists were received at Caen and elsewhere with compassion and respect, the votes they had given in the King's trial, and their fanatic zeal for a kind of government for which France was totally unfitted, and which those from whom they obtained refuge were far from desiring, prevented their playing any distinguished part in the disturbed districts of the West.

Buzot seems to see this in the true sense. "It is certain," he says, "that if we could have rested our pretensions upon having wished to establish in France a moderate government of that character, which, according to many well-instructed persons, best suited the people of France," (indicating a limited monarchy,) "we might have entertained hopes of forming a formidable coalition in the department of Calvados, and rallying around us all whom ancient prejudices attached to royalty."[1] As it was, they were only regarded as a few enthusiasts, whom the example of America had induced to attempt the establishment of a republic, in a country where all hopes and wishes, save those of the Jacobins, and the vile rabble whom they courted and governed, were turned towards a moderate monarchy. Buzot also observed, that the many violences and atrocities, forced levies, and other acts of oppression practised in the name of the Republic, had disgusted men with a form of government, where cruelty seemed to rule over misery by the sole aid of terror. With more candour than some of his companions, he avows his error, and admits that he would, at this closing scene, have willingly united with the moderate monarchists, to establish royalty under the safeguard of constitutional restraints.

Several of the deputies, Louvet, Riouffe, Barbaroux, Pétion, and others, united themselves with a body of Royalists of Bretagne, to whom General Wimpfen had given something of the name of an

[1] [Mémoires de Buzot, p. 98.]

army, but which never attained the solidity of one. It was defeated at Vernon, and never afterwards could be again assembled.

The proscribed deputies, at first with a few armed associates, afterwards entirely deserted, wandered through the country, incurring some romantic adventures, which have been recorded by the pen of their historian, Louvet. At length, six of the party succeeded in obtaining the means of transportation to Bourdeaux, the capital of that Gironde from which their party derived its name, and which those who were natives of it, remembering only the limited society in which they had first acquired their fame, had described as possessing and cherishing the purest principles of philosophical freedom. Guadet had protested to his companions in misfortune a thousand times, that if liberal, honourable, and generous sentiments were chased from every other corner of France, they were nevertheless sure to find refuge in *La Gironde*. The proscribed wanderers had well-nigh kissed the land of refuge, when they disembarked, as in a country of assured protection. But Bourdeaux was by this time no more than a wealthy trading town, where the rich trembling before the poor, were not willing to increase their own imminent danger, by intermeddling with the misfortunes of others. All doors, or nearly so, of La Gironde itself, were shut against the Girondists, and they wandered outcasts in the country, suffering every extremity of toil and hunger, and bringing, in some cases, death upon the friends who ventured to afford them refuge.

Louvet alone escaped, of the six Girondists who took refuge in their own peculiar province. Guadet, Salles, and the enthusiastic Barbaroux, were seized and executed at Bourdeaux, but not till the last had twice attempted suicide with his pistols. Buzot and Pétion killed themselves in extremity, and were found dead in a field of corn. This was the same Pétion who had been so long the idol of the Parisians, and who, when the forfeiture of the King was resolved on, had been heard to say with simple vanity, "If they should force *me* to become regent now, I cannot see any means by which I can avoid it." Others of this unhappy party shared the same melancholy fate. Condorcet, who had pronounced his vote for the King's life, but in perpetual fetters, was arrested, and poisoned himself. Rabaud de St Etienne was betrayed by a friend in whom he trusted, and was executed. Roland was found dead on the high-road, between Paris and Rouen,[1] accomplishing a prophecy of his wife, whom the Jacobins had condemned to death, and who had declared her conviction that her husband would not long survive her. That remarkable woman, happy if her high talents had, in youth, fallen under the direction of those who could better have cultivated them, made before the revolutionary tribunal a defence more

[1] ["He had stabbed himself with a knife, concealed in his walking stick. In his pocket was found a paper, containing these words: 'Whoever you are, oh passenger! who discover my body, respect the remains of the unfortunate. They are those of a man who devoted his whole life to the service of his country. Not fear, but indignation, made me quit my retreat when I heard of the murder of my wife. I loathed a world stained with so many crimes.'"—ROLAND, t. i. p. 46.]

manly than the most eloquent of the Girondists. The bystanders, who had become amateurs in cruelty, were as much delighted with her deportment, as the hunter with the pulling down a noble stag. "What sense," they said; "what wit, what courage! What a magnificent spectacle it will be to behold such a woman upon the scaffold!" She met her death with great firmness, and, as she passed the Statue of Liberty, on her road to execution, she exclaimed, "Ah, Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!"[1]

About forty-two of the Girondist deputies perished by the guillotine, by suicide, or by the fatigue of their wanderings. About twenty-four escaped these perils, and were, after many and various sufferings, recalled to the Convention, when the Jacobin influence was destroyed. They owed their fall to the fantastic philosophy and visionary theories which they had adopted, not less than to their presumptuous confidence, that popular assemblies, when actuated by the most violent personal feelings, must yield to the weight of argument, as inanimate bodies obey the impulse of external force; and that they who possess the highest powers of oratory, can, by mere elocution, take the weight from clubs, the edge from sabres, and the angry and brutal passions from those who wield them. They made no further figure as a party in any of the state changes in France; and, in relation to their experimental Republic, may remind

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 277.]

the reader of the presumptuous champion of antiquity, who was caught in the cleft of oak, which he in vain attempted to rend asunder. History has no more to say on the subject of La Gironde, considered as a party name.

CHAPTER XV.

Views of Parties in Britain relative to the Revolution—Affiliated Societies—Counterpoised by Aristocratic Associations.—Aristocratic Party eager for War with France.—The French proclaim the Navigation of the Scheldt.—British Ambassador recalled from Paris, and French Envoy no longer accredited in London.—France declares War against England.—British Army sent to Holland, under the Duke of York—State of the Army.—View of the Military Positions of France—in Flanders—on the Rhine—in Piedmont—Savoy—on the Pyrenees.—State of the War in La Vendée—Description of the Country—Le Bocage—Le Louroux—Close Union betwixt the Nobles and Peasantry—Both strongly attached to Royalty, and abhorrent of the Revolution.—The Priests.—The Religion of the Vendéans outraged by the Convention.—A general Insurrection takes place in 1793.—Military Organization and Habits of the Vendéans.—Division in the British Cabinet on the Mode of conducting the War.—Pitt—Windham.—Reasoning upon the Subject.—Vendéans defeated—They defeat, in their turn, the French Troops at Laval—But are ultimately destroyed and dispersed.—Unfortunate Expedition to Quiberon.—La Charette defeated and executed, and the War of La Vendée finally terminated.—Unsuccessful Resistance of Bourdeaux, Marseilles, and Lyons, to the Convention.—Siege of Lyons—Its Surrender and dreadful Punishment.—Siege of Toulon.

THE Jacobins, by their successive victories on the 31st May and 2d June, 1793, had vanquished

and driven from the field their adversaries; and we have already seen with what fury they had pursued their scattered enemies, and dealt among them vengeance and death. But the situation of the country, both in regard to external and internal relations, was so precarious, that it required the exertion of men as bold and unhesitating as those who now assumed the guidance of the power of France, to exert the energies necessary to repel foreign force, and at the same time to subdue internal dissension.

We have seen that England had become, in a great measure, divided into two large parties, one of which continued to applaud the French Revolution, although the wise and good among them reprobated its excesses; while the other, with eyes fixed in detestation upon the cruelties, confiscations, and horrors of every description which it had given rise to, looked on the very name of this great change,—though, no doubt, comprehending much good as well as evil,—with the unmixed feelings of men contemplating a spectacle equally dreadful and disgusting.

The affair of the 10th of August, and the approaching fate of the King, excited general interest in Britain; and a strong inclination became visible among the higher and middling classes, that the nation should take up arms, and interfere in the fate of the unhappy Louis.

Mr Pitt had been making up his mind to the same point; but, feeling how much his own high talents were turned to the improvement of the internal regulations and finances of the country, he hesitated for some time to adopt a hostile course,

though approved by the sovereign, and demanded by a large proportion of his subjects. But new circumstances arose every day to compel a decision on this important point.

The French, whether in their individual or collective capacities, have been always desirous to take the lead among European nations, and to be considered as the foremost member of the civilized republic. In almost all her vicissitudes, France has addressed herself as much to the citizens of other countries as to those of her own; and it was thus, that in the speeches of her statesmen, invitations were thrown out to the subjects of other states, to imitate the example of the Republic, cast away the rubbish of their old institutions, dethrone their Kings, demolish their nobility, divide the lands of the church and the aristocracy among the lower classes, and arise a free and regenerated people. In Britain as elsewhere, these doctrines carried a fascinating sound; for Britain as well as France had men of parts, who thought themselves neglected,—men of merit, who conceived themselves oppressed,—experimentalists, who would willingly put the laws in their revolutionary crucible,—and men desirous of novelties in the church and in the state, either from the eagerness of restless curiosity, or the hopes of bettering by the change. Above all, Britain had a far too ample mass of poverty and ignorance, subject always to be acted upon by the hope of license. Affiliated societies were formed in almost all the towns of Great Britain. They corresponded with each other, held very high and intimidating language, and seemed to frame them-

selves on the French model. They addressed the National Convention of France directly in the name of their own bodies, and of societies united for the same purpose; and congratulated them on their freedom, and on the manner in which they had gained it, with many a broad hint that their example would not be lost on Britain. The persons who composed these societies had, generally speaking, little pretension to rank or influence; and though they contained some men of considerable parts, there was a deficiency of any thing like weight or respectability in their meetings. Their consequence lay chiefly in the numbers who were likely to be influenced by their arguments; and these were extraordinarily great, especially in large towns, and in the manufacturing districts. That state of things began to take place in Britain, which had preceded the French Revolution; but the British aristocracy, well cemented together, and possessing great weight in the state, took the alarm sooner, and adopted precautions more effectual, than had been thought of in France. They associated together in political unions on their side, and, by the weight of influence, character, and fortune, soon obtained a superiority, which made it dangerous, or at least inconvenient, to many, whose situations in society rendered them, in some degree, dependent upon the favour of the aristocracy, to dissent violently from their opinions. The political Shibboleth, used by these associations, was a renunciation of the doctrines of the French Revolution; and they have been reproached, that this abhorrence was expressed by some of them in terms so strong,

as if designed to withhold the subscribers from attempting any reformation in their own government, even by the most constitutional means. In short, while the democratical party made, in their clubs, the most violent and furious speeches against the aristocrats, the others became doubly prejudiced against reform of every description, and all who attempted to assert its propriety. After all, had this political ferment broke out in Britain at any other period, or on any other occasion, it would have probably passed away like other heart-burnings of the same description, which interest for a time, but weary out the public attention, and are laid aside and forgotten. But the French Revolution blazed in the neighbourhood like a beacon of hope to the one party, of fear and caution to the other. The shouts of the democratic triumphs—the foul means by which their successes were obtained, and the cruel use which was made of them, increased the animosity of both parties in England. In the fury of party zeal, the democrats excused many of the excesses of the French Revolution, in respect of its tendency; while the other party, in condemning the whole Revolution, both root and branch, forgot that, after all, the struggle of the French nation to recover their liberty, was, in its commencement, not only justifiable, but laudable.

The wild and inflated language addressed by the French statesmen to mankind in general, and the spirit of conquest which the nation had lately evinced, mixed with their marked desire to extend their political principles, and with the odium which they had heaped upon themselves by the King's

death, made the whole aristocratic party, commanding a very large majority in both Houses of Parliament, become urgent that war should be declared against France; a holy war, it was said, against treason, blasphemy, and murder, and a necessary war, in order to break off all connexion betwixt the French Government and the discontented part of our own subjects, who could not otherwise be prevented from the most close, constant, aud dangerous intercourse with them.

Another reason for hostilities, more in parallel with similar cases in history, occurred, from the French having, by a formal decree, proclaimed the Scheldt navigable. In so doing, a point had been assumed as granted, upon the denial of which the States of Holland had always rested as the very basis of their national prosperity. It is probable that this might, in other circumstances, have been made the subject of negotiation: but the difference of opinion on the general politics of the Revolution, and the mode in which it had been carried on, set the governments of France and England in such direct and mortal opposition to each other, that war became inevitable.

Lord Gower,[1] the British ambassador, was recalled from Paris, immediately on the King's execution. The prince to whom he was sent was no more; and, on the same ground, Chauvelin, the French envoy at the Court of St James's, though not dismissed by his Majesty's government, was made acquainted that the ministers no longer con-

[1] [Afterwards Marquis of Stafford, and created Duke of Sutherland. He died in 1833.]

sidered him as an accredited person.[1] Yet, through Maret,[2] a subordinate agent, Pitt continued to keep up some correspondence with the French Government, in a lingering desire to preserve peace, if possible. What the British minister chiefly wished was, to have satisfactory assurances, that the strong expressions of a decree, which the French Convention had passed on the 19th November, were not to be considered as applicable to England. The decree was in these words: "The National Convention declares, in the name of the French nation, that it will grant fraternity and assistance to all people who wish to recover their liberty; and it charges the executive power to send the necessary orders to the generals, to give succours to such people, and to defend those citizens who have suffered, or may suffer, in the cause of liberty."— "That this decree might not remain a secret to those for whose benefit it was intended, a translation of it, in every foreign language, was ordered to be printed."[3] The Convention, as well as the ministers of France, refused every disavowal of the decree as applicable to Great Britain; were equally reluctant to grant explanation of any kind on the opening of the Scheldt; and finally, with-

[1] [Annual Register, vol. xxxv. p. 128.]

[2] [In 1789, Maret published the proceedings of the States-General, under the title of "Bulletin de l'Assemblée," taking Woodfall's Parliamentary Register for his model. The success of the experiment was so great, that when Pankouke, the bookseller, projected the plan of the "*Moniteur*," he prevailed on Maret to transfer his labours to the new journal. Such was the origin of Napoleon's well-known Duke of Bassano.]

[3] [Annual Register, vol. xxxv. p. 153.]

out one dissentient voice, the whole Convention, in a full meeting, [Feb. 1,] declared war upon England;[1] — which last nation is, nevertheless, sometimes represented, even at this day, as having declared war upon France.

In fact, Mr Pitt came unwillingly into the war. With even more than his great father's ministerial talents, he did not habitually nourish the schemes of military triumph, which were familiar to the genius of Chatham, and was naturally unwilling, by engaging in an expensive war, to derange those plans of finance by which he had retrieved the revenues of Great Britain from a very low condition. It is said of Chatham, that he considered it as the best economy, to make every military expedition which he fitted out, of such a power and strength, as to overbear, as far as possible, all chance of opposition. A general officer, who was to be employed in such a piece of service, having demanded a certain body of troops as sufficient to effect his purpose,—"Take double the number," said Lord Chatham, "and answer with your head for your success." His son had not the same mode of computation, and would, perhaps, have been more willing to have reduced the officer's terms, chaffered with him for the lowest number, and finally despatched him at the head of as small a body as the general could have been prevailed on to consider as affording any prospect of success. This untimely economy of resources arose from the expense attending the British army. They are

[1] [See the Declaration, Annual Register, vol. xxxv. p. 139.]

certainly one of the bravest, best appointed, and most liberally paid in Europe; but in forming demands on their valour, and expectations from their exertions, their fellow-subjects are apt to indulge extravagant computations, from not being in the habit of considering military calculations, or being altogether aware of the numerical superiority possessed by other countries. That one Englishman will fight two Frenchmen is certain; but that he will beat them, though a good article of the popular creed, must be allowed to be more dubious; and it is not wise to wage war on such odds, or to suppose that, because our soldiers are infinitely valuable to us, and a little expensive besides, it is therefore judicious to send them in small numbers against desperate odds.

Another point, well touched by Sheridan, during the debate on the question of peace or war, was not sufficiently attended to by the British Administration. That statesman, whose perception of the right and wrong of any great constitutional question was as acute as that of any whomever of his great political contemporaries, said, "He wished every possible exertion to be made for the preservation of peace. If, however, that were impracticable, in such case, but in such case only, he proposed to vote for a vigorous war. Not a war of shifts and scraps, of timid operation, or protracted effort; but a war conducted with such energy as might convince the world that we were contending for our dearest and most valuable privileges."[1]

[1] Annual Register, vol. xxxv. p. 250.

Of this high-spirited and most just principle, the policy of Britain unfortunately lost sight during the first years of the war, when there occurred more than one opportunity in which a home and prostrating blow might have been aimed at her gigantic adversary.

A gallant auxiliary army was, however, immediately fitted out, and embarked for Holland, with his Royal Highness the Duke of York at their head; as if the King had meant to give to his allies the dearest pledge in his power, how serious was the interest which he took in their defence.

But, though well equipped, and commanded, under the young prince, by Abercromby, Dundas, Sir William Erskine, and many other officers of gallantry and experience, it must be owned that the British army had not then recovered the depressing and disorganizing effects of the American war. The soldiers were, indeed, fine men on the parade; but their external appearance was acquired by dint of a thousand minute and vexatious attentions, exacted from them at the expense of private comfort, and which, after all, only gave them the exterior appearance of high drilling, in exchange for ease of motion and simplicity of dress. No general system of manœuvres, we believe, had been adopted for the use of the forces; each commanding officer managed his regiment according to his own pleasure. In a field-day, two or three battalions could not act in concert, without much previous consultation; in action, they got on as chance directed. The officers, too, were acquainted both with their soldiers and with their duty, in a

degree far inferior to what is now exacted from them. Our system of purchasing commissions, which is necessary to connect the army with the country, and the property of the country, was at that time so much abused, that a mere beardless boy might be forced at once through the subordinate and subaltern steps into a company or a majority, without having been a month in the army. In short, all those gigantic abuses were still subsisting, which the illustrious prince whom we have named eradicated from the British army, by regulations, for which his country can never be sufficiently grateful, and without which they could never have performed the distinguished part finally destined to them in the terrible drama, which was about to open under less successful auspices.

There hung also, like a cloud, upon the military fame of England, the unfortunate issue of the American struggle; in which the advantages obtained by regulars, against less disciplined forces, had been trifled with in the commencement, until the genius of Washington, and the increasing spirit and numbers of the continental armies, completely overbalanced, and almost annihilated, that original preponderance.

Yet the British soldiery did not disgrace their high national character, nor show themselves unworthy of fighting under the eye of the son of their monarch; and when they joined the Austrian army, under the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, gave many demonstrations both of valour and discipline. The storming the fortified camp of the French at Famars—the battle of Lincelles—the part they bore

in the sieges of Valenciennes and Condé, both of which surrendered successively to the allied forces, upheld the reputation of their country, and amounted, indeed, to what, in former wars, would have been the fruits of a very successful campaign.[1] But Europe was now arrived at a time when war was no longer to be carried on according to the old usage, by the agency of standing armies of moderate numbers; when a battle lost and won, or a siege raised or successful, was thought sufficient for the active exertions of the year, and the troops on either side were drawn off into winter quarters, while diplomacy took up the contest which tactics had suspended. All this was to be laid aside; and instead of this drowsy state of hostility, nations were to contend with each other like individuals in mortal conflict, bringing not merely the hands, but every limb of the body into violent and furious struggle. The situation of France, both in internal and external relations, required the most dreadful efforts which had been ever made by any country; and the exertions which she demanded, were either willingly made by the enthusiasm of the inhabitants, or extorted by the energy and severity of the revolutionary government. We must bestow a single glance on the state of the country, ere we proceed to notice the measures adopted for its defence.

On the north-eastern frontier of France, considerable advances had been made by the English and Hanoverian army, in communication and conjunction with the Austrian force under the Prince

[1] [Jomini, t. iii. pp. 163—181; Toulongeon, t. iv. pp. 6–43.]

of Saxe-Cobourg, an excellent officer, but who, belonging to the old school of formal and prolonged war, never sufficiently considered, that a new description of enemies were opposed to him, who were necessarily to be combated in a different manner from those whom his youth had encountered, and who, unenterprising himself, does not appear either to have calculated upon, or prepared to counteract, strokes of audacity and activity on the part of the enemy.

The war on the Rhine was furiously maintained by Prussians and Austrians united. The French lost the important town of Mentz, were driven out of other places, and experienced many reverses, although Custine,[1] Moreau, Houchard,[2] Beauharnais,[3] and other general officers of high merit, had already given lustre to the arms of the Republic. The loss of the strong lines of Weissenburgh, which were carried by General Wurmser, a distinguished Austrian officer, completed the shade of disadvantage which here hung on the Republican banners.[4]

In Piedmont, the French were also unsuccess-

[1] [On the loss of Mentz, the Convention ordered Custine to Paris to answer for his conduct, and delivered him over to the revolutionary tribunal, by whom, in August, 1793, he was condemned and executed.]

[2] [Accused of not having followed up the advantages at Hondscoote, by an immediate attack upon the British force. Houchard was brought before the revolutionary tribunal, condemned, and executed, 17th Nov. 1793.]

[3] [Alexander, Viscount de Beauharnais, first husband of Josephine. Denounced as an aristocrat by his own troops, he was, in July, 1794, dragged before the revolutionary tribunal, which instantly condemned him to death.]

[4] [Toulongeon, t iv. p. 142; Jomini, t. iv. pp 88–105.]

ful, though the scale was less grand and imposing. The republican general Brunet[1] was unfortunate, and he was forced from his camp at Belvidere; while, on the side of Savoy, the King of Sardinia also obtained several temporary advantages.

On the Pyrenees, the Republican armies had been equally unsuccessful. A Spanish army, conducted with more spirit than had been lately the case with the troops of that once proud monarchy, had defeated the republican general Servan, and crossed the Bidassoa. On the eastern extremity of these celebrated mountains, the Spaniards had taken the towns of Port Vendre and Ollioulles.[2]

Assailed on so many sides, and by so many enemies, all of whom, excepting the Sardinians, had more or less made impression upon the frontiers of the Republic, it might seem, that the only salvation which remained for France, must have been sought for in the unanimity of her inhabitants. But so far was the nation from possessing this first of requisites for a successful opposition to the overpowering coalition which assailed her, that a dreadful civil war was already waged in the western provinces of France, which threatened, from its importance and the success of the insurgents, to undo in a great measure the work of the Revolution; while similar discords breaking out on different points in the south, menaced conclusions no less formidable.

It does not belong to us to trace the interesting

[1] [Condemned to death, Nov. 6, 1793, by the revolutionary tribunal.]

[2] [Jomini, t. iv. p. 273.]

features of the war in La Vendée with a minute pencil, but they mingle too much with the history of the period to be altogether omitted.

We have elsewhere said, that, speaking of La Vendée as a district, it was there alone, through the whole kingdom of France, that the peasants and the nobles, in other words the proprietors and cultivators of the soil, remained on terms of close and intimate connexion and friendship, which made them feel the same undivided interest in the great changes created by the Revolution. The situation of La Vendée, its soil and character, as well as the manners of the people, had contributed to an arrangement of interests and habits of thinking, which rendered the union betwixt these two classes indissoluble.

La Vendée is a wooded and pastoral country, not indeed mountainous, but abounding in inequalities of ground, crossed by brooks, and intersected by a variety of canals and ditches, made for drainage, but which become, with the numerous and intricate thickets, posts of great strength in the time of war. The enclosures seemed to be won, as it were, out of the woodland; and the paths which traversed the country were so intricate and perplexed, as to render it inaccessible to strangers, and not easily travelled through by the natives themselves. There were almost no roads practicable for ordinary carriages during the rainy season; and the rainy season in La Vendée is a long one. The ladies of rank, when they visited, went in carriages drawn by bullocks; the gentlemen, as well as the peasants, travelled chiefly on foot; and by

assistance of the long leaping-poles, which they carried for that purpose, surmounted the ditches and other obstacles which other travellers found impassable.

The whole tract of country is about one hundred and fifty miles square, and lies at the mouth and on the southern bank of the Loire. The internal part is called Le Bocage, (the Thicket,) because partaking in a peculiar degree of the wooded and intricate character which belongs to the whole country. That portion of La Vendée which lies close to the Loire, and nearer its mouth, is called Le Louroux. The neighbouring districts partook in the insurrection; but the strength and character which it assumed was derived chiefly from La Vendée.

The union betwixt the noblesse of La Vendée and their peasants, was of the most intimate character. Their chief exportations from the district consisted in the immense herds of cattle which they reared in their fertile meadows, and which supplied the consumption of the metropolis. These herds, as well as the land on which they were raised, were in general the property of the seigneur; but the farmer possessed a joint interest in the latter. He managed the stock and disposed of it at market, and there was an equitable adjustment of their interests in disposing of the produce.

Their amusements were also in common. The chase of wolves, not only for the sake of sport, but to clear the woods of those ravenous animals, was pursued as of yore by the seigneur at the head of his followers and vassals. Upon the evenings of Sundays and holydays, the young people of each

village and *métairie* repaired to the court-yard of the chateau, as the natural and proper scene for their evening amusement, and the family of the baron often took part in the pastime.

In a word, the two divisions of society depended mutually on each other, and were strongly knit together by ties, which, in other districts of France, existed only in particular instances. The Vendéan peasant was the faithful and attached, though humble friend of his lord; he was his partner in bad and good fortune; submitted to his decision the disputes which might occur betwixt him and his neighbours; and had recourse to his protection if he sustained wrong, or was threatened with injustice from any one.

This system of simple and patriarchal manners could not have long subsisted under any great inequality of fortune. Accordingly, we find that the wealthiest of the Vendéan nobility did not hold estates worth more than twelve or fifteen hundred a-year, while the lowest might be three or four hundred. They were not accordingly much tempted by exuberance of wealth to seek to display magnificence; and such as went to court, and conformed to the fashions of the capital, were accustomed to lay them aside in all haste when they returned to the Bocage, and to reassume the simple manners of their ancestors.

All the incentives to discord which abounded elsewhere through France, were wanting in this wild and wooded region, where the peasant was the noble's affectionate partner and friend, the noble the natural judge and protector of the pea-

sant. The people had retained the feelings of the ancient French in favour of royalty; they listened with dissatisfaction and disgust to the accounts of the Revolution as it proceeded; and feeling themselves none of the evils in which it originated, its whole tendency became the object of their alarm and suspicion. The neighbouring districts, and Bretagne in particular, were agitated by similar commotions; for although the revolutionary principles predominated in the towns of the west, they were not relished by the country people any more than by the nobles. Great agitation had for some time taken place through the provinces of Bretagne, Anjou, Maine, and Poitou, to which the strength of the insurrection in La Vendée gave impulse. It was not, however, a political impulse which induced the Vendéans to take the field. The influence of religion, seconded by that of natural affection, was the immediate stimulating motive.

In a country so simple and virtuous in its manners as we have described La Vendée, religious devotion must necessarily be a general attribute of the inhabitants, who, conscious of loving their neighbours as themselves, are equally desirous, to the extent of their strength and capacity, to love and honour the Great Being who created all. The Vendéans were therefore very regular in the performance of their prescribed religious duties; and their parish priest, or curé, held an honoured and influential rank in their little society, was the attendant of the sick-bed of the peasant, as well for rendering medical as religious aid; his counsellor in his family affairs, and often the arbiter of dis-

putes not of sufficient importance to be carried before the seigneur. The priests were themselves generally natives of the country, more distinguished for the primitive duty with which they discharged their office, than for talents and learning. The curé took frequent share in the large hunting parties, which he announced from the pulpit, and after having said mass, attended in person with the fowling-piece on his shoulder. This active and simple manner of life rendered the priests predisposed to encounter the fatigues of war. They accompanied the bands of Vendéans with the crucifix displayed, and promised, in the name of the Deity, victory to the survivors, and honour to those who fell in the patriotic combat. But Madame La Roche-Jacquelein repels, as a calumny, their bearing arms, except for the purpose of self-defence.[1]

Almost all these parish priests were driven from their cures by the absurd and persecuting fanaticism of that decree of the Assembly, which, while its promoters railed against illiberality, and intolerance, deprived of their office and of their livelihood, soon after of liberty and life, those churchmen who would not renounce the doctrines in which they had been educated, and which they had sworn to maintain.[2] In La Vendée, as elsewhere, where the curates resisted this unjust and impolitic injunction of the legislature, persecution followed on

[1] [La Roche-Jacquelein, p. 35; Guerres des Vendéans et des Chouans, t. i. p. 31.]

[2] [See *ante*, vol. viii. p. 208.]

the part of the government, and was met in its turn by violence on that of the people.

The peasants maintained in secret their ancient pastors, and attended their ministry in woods and deserts; while the intruders, who were settled in the livings of the recusants, dared hardly appear in the churches without the protection of the national guards.

So early as 1791, when Dumouriez commanded the forces at Nantes, and the districts adjacent, the flame of dissension had begun to kindle. That general's sagacity induced him to do his best to appease the quarrel by moderating betwixt the parties. His military eye detected in the inhabitants and their country an alarming scene for civil war. He received the slightest concessions on the part of the parish priests as satisfactory, and appears to have quieted the disturbances of the country, at least for a time.[1]

But in 1793, the same causes of discontent, added to others, hurried the inhabitants of La Vendée into a general insurrection of the most formidable description. The events of the 10th of August, 1792, had driven from Paris a great proportion of the Royalist nobility, who had many of them carried their discontents and their counter-revolutionary projects into a country prepared to receive and adopt them.

Then followed the Conventional decree, which supported their declaration of war by a compulsory levy of three hundred thousand men throughout

[1] [Dumouriez, v. ii. p. 144.]

France. This measure was felt as severe by even those departments in which the revolutionary principles were most predominant, but was regarded as altogether intolerable by the Vendéans, averse alike to the republican cause and principles. They resisted its exaction by main force, delivered the conscripts in many instances, defeated the national guards in others, and finding that they had incurred the vengeance of a sanguinary government, resolved by force to maintain the resistance which in force had begun. Thus originated that celebrated war, which raged so long in the very bosom of France, and threatened the stability of her government, even while the Republic was achieving the most brilliant victories over her foreign enemies.[1]

It is remote from our purpose to trace the history of these hostilities; but a sketch of their nature and character is essential to a general view of the Revolution, and the events connected with it.

The insurgents, though engaged in the same cause, and frequently cooperating, were divided into different bodies, under leaders independent of each other. Those of the right bank of the Loire were chiefly under the orders of the celebrated La Charette, who, descended from a family distinguished as commanders of privateers, and himself a naval officer, had taken on him this dangerous command. An early wandering disposition, not unusual among youth of eager and ambitious character, had made him acquainted with the inmost

[1] [Guerres des Vendéans, t. i. p. 65; La Roche-Jacquelein, p. 38.]

recesses of the woods, and his native genius had induced him to anticipate the military advantages which they afforded.[1] In his case, as in many others, either the sagacity of these uninstructed peasants led them to choose for command men whose talents best fitted them to enjoy it, or perhaps the perils which environed such authority prevented its being aspired to, save by those whom a mixture of resolution and prudence led to feel themselves capable of maintaining their character when invested with it. It was remarkable also, that in choosing their leaders, the insurgents made no distinction between the noblesse and the inferior ranks. Names renowned in ancient history—Talmont, D'Autichamp, L'Escure, and La Roche-Jacquelein, were joined in equal command with the gamekeeper Stoflet; Cathelineau, an itinerant wool-merchant; La Charette, a roturier of slight pretensions; and others of the lowest order, whom the time and the public voice called into command, but who, nevertheless, do not seem, in general, to have considered their official command as altering the natural distinction of their rank in society.[2] In their success, they formed a general council of officers, priests, and others, who held their meetings at Chatillon, and directed the military movements of the different bodies; assembled them at

[1] [Thiers, t. iv. p. 175.]

[2] Madame La Roche-Jacquelein mentions an interesting anecdote of a young plebeian, a distinguished officer, whose habits of respect would scarce permit him to sit down in her presence. This cannot be termed servility. It is the noble pride of a generous mind, faithful to its original impressions, and disclaiming the merits which others are ready to heap on it.

pleasure on particular points, and for particular objects of service; and dispersed them to their homes when these were accomplished.

With an organization so simple, the Vendéan insurgents, in about two months, possessed themselves of several towns and an extensive tract of country; and though repeatedly attacked by regular forces, commanded by experienced generals, they were far more frequently victors than vanquished, and inflicted more loss on the Republicans by gaining a single battle, than they themselves sustained in repeated defeats.

Yet at first their arms were of the most simple and imperfect kind. Fowling-pieces, and fusees of every calibre, they possessed from their habits as huntsmen and fowlers; for close encounter they had only scythes, axes, clubs, and such weapons as anger places most readily in the hands of the peasant. Their victories, latterly, supplied them with arms in abundance, and they manufactured gunpowder for their own use in great quantity.

Their tactics were peculiar to themselves, but of a kind so well suited to their country and their habits, that it seems impossible to devise a better and more formidable system. The Vendéan took the field with the greatest simplicity of military equipment. His scrip served as a cartridge-box, his uniform was the country short jacket and pantaloons, which he wore at his ordinary labour; a cloth knapsack contained bread and some necessaries, and thus he was ready for service. They were accustomed to move with great secrecy and silence amongst the thickets and enclosures by

which their country is intersected, and were thus enabled to choose at pleasure the most favourable points of attack or defence. Their army, unlike any other in the world, was not divided into companies, or regiments, but followed in bands, and at their pleasure, the chiefs to whom they were most attached. Instead of drums or military music, they used, like the ancient Swiss and Scottish soldiers, the horns of cattle for giving signals to their troops. Their officers wore, for distinction, a sort of chequered red handkerchief, knotted round their head, with others of the same colour tied round their waist, by way of sash, in which they stuck their pistols.[1]

The attack of the Vendéans was that of sharp-shooters. They dispersed themselves so as to surround their adversaries with a semicircular fire, maintained by a body of formidable marksmen, accustomed to take aim with fatal precision, and whose skill was the more dreadful, because, being habituated to take advantage of every tree, bush, or point of shelter, those who were dealing destruction amongst others, were themselves comparatively free from risk. This manœuvre was termed *s'égaler;* and the execution of it resembling the Indian bush-fighting, was, like the attack

[1] The adoption of this wild costume, which procured them the name of *brigands*, from its fantastic singularity, originated in the whim of Henri La Roche-Jacquelein, who first used the attire. But as this peculiarity, joined to the venturous exposure of his person, occasioned a general cry among the Republicans, of "Aim at the red handkerchief," other officers assumed the fashion to diminish the danger of the chief whom they valued so highly, until at length it became a kind of uniform.

of the red warriors, accompanied by whoops and shouts, which seemed, from the extended space through which they resounded, to multiply the number of the assailants.

When the Republicans, galled in this manner, pressed forward to a close attack, they found no enemy on which to wreak their vengeance; for the loose array of the Vendéans gave immediate passage to the head of the charging column, while its flanks, as it advanced, were still more exposed than before to the murderous fire of their invisible enemies. In this manner they were sometimes led on from point to point, until the regulars meeting with a barricade, or an *abatis*, or a strong position in front, or becoming perhaps involved in a defile, the Vendéans exchanged their fatal musketry for a close and furious onset, throwing themselves with the most devoted courage among the enemy's ranks, and slaughtering them in great numbers. If, on the other hand, the insurgents were compelled to give way, a pursuit was almost as dangerous to the Republicans as an engagement. The Vendéan, when hard pressed, threw away his clogs, or wooden shoes, of which he could make himself a new pair at the next resting-place, sprang over a fence or canal, loaded his fusee as he ran, and discharged it at the pursuer with a fatal aim, whenever he found opportunity of pausing for that purpose.

This species of combat, which the ground rendered so advantageous to the Vendéans, was equally so in case of victory or defeat. If the Republicans were vanquished, their army was

nearly destroyed; for the preservation of order became impossible, and without order their extermination was inevitable, while baggage, ammunition, carriages, guns, and all the material part, as it is called, of the defeated army, fell into possession of the conquerors. On the other hand, if the Vendéans sustained a loss, the victors found nothing on the field but the bodies of the slain, and the *sabots*, or wooden-shoes of the fugitives. The few prisoners whom they made had generally thrown away or concealed their arms, and their army having no baggage or carriages of any kind, could of course lose none. Pursuit was very apt to convert an advantage into a defeat; for the cavalry could not act, and the infantry, dispersed in the chase, became frequent victims to those whom they pursued.

In the field, the Vendéans were courageous to rashness. They hesitated not to attack and carry artillery with no other weapons than their staves; and most of their worst losses proceeded from their attacking fortified towns and positions with the purpose of carrying them by main force. After conquest they were in general humane and merciful: but this depended on the character of their chiefs. At Machecoul, the insurgents conducted themselves with great ferocity in the very beginning of the civil war; and towards the end of it, mutual and reciprocal injuries had so exasperated the parties against each other, that quarter was neither given nor taken on either side. Yet until provoked by the extreme cruelties of the Revolutionary party, and unless when conducted by some

peculiarly ferocious chief, the character of the Vendéans united clemency with courage. They gave quarter readily to the vanquished, but having no means of retaining prisoners, they usually shaved their heads before they set them at liberty, that they might be distinguished, if found again in arms, contrary to their parole. A no less striking feature, was the severity of a discipline respecting property, which was taught them only by their moral sense. No temptation could excite them to pillage; and Madame La Roche-Jacquelein has preserved the following singular instance of their simple honesty:—After the peasants had taken the town of Bressuire by storm, she overheard two or three of them complain of the want of tobacco, to the use of which they were addicted, like the natives of moist countries in general. "What," said the lady, "is there no tobacco in the shops?" — "Tobacco enough," answered the simple-hearted and honest peasants, who had not learned to make steel supply the want of gold,—"tobacco enough; but we have no money to pay for it."[1]

Amidst these primitive warriors were mingled many gentlemen of the first families in France, who, Royalists from principle, had fled to La Vendée rather than submit to the dominion of the Convention, or the Convention's yet more cruel masters. There were found many men, the anecdotes told of whom remind us continually of the age of Henri Quatre, and the heroes of chivalry. In these ranks, and almost on a level with the valiant pea-

[1] [La Roche-Jacquelein, p. 90.]

sants of which they were composed, fought the calm, steady, and magnanimous L'Escure,—D'-Elbée, a man of the most distinguished military reputation,—Bonchamp, the gallant and the able officer, who, like the Constable Montmorency, with all his talent, was persecuted by fortune,—the chivalrous Henry La Roche-Jacquelein, whose call upon his soldiers was—"If I fly, slay me—if I advance, follow me—if I fall, avenge me;" with other names distinguished[1] in the roll of fame, and not the less so that they have been recorded by the pen of affection.

The object of the insurrection was announced in the title of The Royal and Catholic Army, assumed by the Vendéans. In their moments of highest hope their wishes were singularly modest. Had they gained Paris, and replaced the royal authority in France, they meditated the following simple boons:—1. They had resolved to petition, that the name of La Vendée be given to the Bocage and its dependencies, which should be united under a separate administration, instead of forming, as at present, a part of three distinct provinces.—2. That the restored monarch would honour the Bocage with a visit.—3. That in remembrance of the loyal

[1] The Memoirs of Madame Bonchamp, and still more those of Madame La Roche-Jacquelein, are remarkable for the virtues of the heart, as well as the talents which are displayed by their authors. Without affectation, without vanity, without violence or impotent repining, these ladies have described the sanguinary and irregular warfare, in which they and those who were dearest to them were engaged for so long and stormy a period; and we arise from the perusal sadder and wiser, by having learned what the brave can dare, and what the gentle can endure with patience.

services of the country, a white flag should be displayed from each steeple, and the King should add a cohort of Vendéans to his body-guard.—4. That former useful projects of improving the navigation of the Loire and its canals, should be perfected by the government. So little of selfish hope or ambition was connected with the public spirit of these patriarchal warriors.

The war of La Vendée was waged with various fate for nearly two years, during which the insurgents, or brigands as they were termed, gained by far the greater number of advantages, though with means infinitely inferior to those of the government, which detached against them one general after another, at the head of numerous armies, with equally indifferent success. Most of the Republicans intrusted with this fatal command suffered by the guillotine, for not having done that which circumstances rendered impossible.

Upwards of two hundred battles and skirmishes were fought in this devoted country. The revolutionary fever was in its access; the shedding of blood seemed to have become positive pleasure to the perpetrators of slaughter, and was varied by each invention which cruelty could invent to give it new zest. The habitations of the Vendéans were destroyed, their families subjected to violation and massacre, their cattle houghed and slaughtered, and their crops burnt and wasted. One Republican column assumed and merited the name of the Infernal, by the horrid atrocities which they committed. At Pillau, they roasted the women and children in a heated oven. Many similar horrors

could be added, did not the heart and hand recoil from the task. Without quoting any more special instances of horror, we use the words of a Republican eyewitness, to express the general spectacle presented by the theatre of civil conflict:—

"I did not see a single male being at the towns of Saint Hermand, Chantonnay, or Herbiers. A few women alone had escaped the sword. Country-seats, cottages, habitations of whichever kind, were burnt. The herds and flocks were wandering in terror around their usual places of shelter, now smoking in ruins. I was surprised by night, but the wavering and dismal blaze of conflagration afforded light over the country. To the bleating of the disturbed flocks, and bellowing of the terrified cattle, was joined the deep hoarse notes of carrion crows, and the yells of wild animals coming from the recesses of the woods to prey on the carcasses of the slain. At length a distant column of fire, widening and increasing as I approached, served me as a beacon. It was the town of Mortagne in flames. When I arrived there, no living creatures were to be seen, save a few wretched women who were striving to save some remnants of their property from the general conflagration."[1]

Such is civil war! and to this pass had its extremities reduced the smiling, peaceful, and virtuous country, which we have described a few pages before!

It is no wonder, after such events, that the hearts of the peasants became hardened in turn, and that

[1] Mémoires d'un Ancien Administrateur des Armées Republicaines.

they executed fearful vengeance on those who could not have the face to expect mercy. We read, therefore, without surprise, that the Republican General Haxo,[1] a man of great military talent, and who had distinguished himself in the Vendéan war, shot himself through the head, when he saw his army defeated by the insurgents, rather than encounter their vengeance.

During the superiority of the Vendéans, it may be asked why their efforts, so gigantic in themselves, never extended beyond the frontier of their own country; and why an insurrection, so considerable and so sustained, neither made any great impression on the French Convention, where they were spoken of only as a handful of brigands, nor on foreign nations, by whom their existence, far less their success, seems hardly to have been known? On the former subject, it is perhaps sufficient to observe, that the war of the Vendéans, and their mode of conducting it, so formidable in their own country, became almost nugatory when extended into districts of an open character, and affording high-roads and plains, by which cavalry and artillery could act against peasants, who formed no close ranks, and carried no bayonets. Besides, the Vendéans remained bound to their ordinary occupation —they were necessarily children of the soil—and their army usually dispersed after the battle was over, to look after their cattle, cultivate the plot of arable land, and attend to their families. The discipline of their array, in which mere good-will sup-

[1] [Haxo died at Roche-sur-yon, April 26, 1794.]

plied the place of the usual distinctions of rank, would not have been sufficient to keep them united in long and distant marches, and they must have found the want of a commissariat, a train of baggage, field-pieces, a general staff, and all the other accompaniments of a regular army, which, in the difficult country of La Vendée, familiar to the natives, and unknown to strangers, could be so easily dispensed with. In a word, an army which, under circumstances of hope and excitation, might one day amount to thirty or forty thousand, and on the next be diminished to the tenth part of the number, might be excellent for fighting battles, but could not be relied on for making conquests, or securing the advantages of victory.

It is not but that a man of D'Elbée's knowledge in the art of war, who acted as one of their principal leaders, meditated higher objects for the Vendéans than merely the defence of their own province.

A superb prospect offered itself to them by a meditated attack on the town of Nantes. Upon the success of this attempt turned, perhaps, the fate of the Revolution. This beautiful and important commercial city is situated on the right bank of the Loire, which is there a fine navigable river, about twenty-seven miles from its junction with the sea. It is without fortifications of any regular description, but had a garrison of perhaps ten thousand men, and was covered by such hasty works of defence as time had permitted them to erect. The force of the Vendéans by which it was attacked, has been estimated so high as thirty

or forty thousand men under D'Elbée, while the place was blockaded on the left bank by Charette, and an army of Royalists equal in number to the actual assailants. Had this important place been gained, it would probably have changed the face of the war. One or more of the French princes might have resorted there with such adherents as they had then in arms. The Loire was open to succours from England, the indecision of whose cabinet might have been determined by a success so important. Bretagne and Normandy, already strongly disposed to the royal cause, would have, upon such encouragement, risen in mass upon the Republicans; and as Poitou and Anjou were already in possession of The Royal and Catholic Army, they might probably have opened a march upon Paris, distracted as the capital then was by civil and foreign war.[1]

Accordingly, [June 18th,] the rockets which were thrown up, and the sound of innumerable bugle-horns, intimated to General Canclaux, who commanded the town, that he was to repel a general attack of the Vendéans. Fortunately, for the infant republic, he was a man of military skill and high courage, and by his dexterous use of such means of defence as the place afforded, and particularly by a great superiority of artillery, he was enabled to baffle the attacks of the Vendéans, although they penetrated, with the utmost courage, into the suburbs, and engaged at close quarters the Republican troops. They were compelled

[1] [See Jomini, t. vi. p. 400.]

to retreat after a fierce combat, which lasted from three in the morning till four in the afternoon.[1]

At different times after the failure of this bold and well-imagined attempt, opportunities occurred during which the allies, and the English government in particular, might have thrown important succours into La Vendée. The island of Noirmoutier was for some time in possession of the Royalists, when arms and money might have been supplied to them to any amount. Auxiliary forces would probably have been of little service, considering in what sort of country they were to be engaged, and with what species of troops they were to act. At least it would have required the talents of a Peterborough or a Montrose, in a foreign commander, to have freed himself sufficiently from the trammels of military pedantry, and availed himself of the peculiar qualities of such troops as the Vendéans, irresistible after their own fashion, but of a character the most opposite possible to the ideas of excellence entertained by a mere martinet.

But it is now well known, there was a division in the British Cabinet concerning the mode of

[1] A picture by Vernet, representing the attack on Nantes, estimable as a work of art, but extremely curious in an historical point of view, used to be in the Luxembourg palace, and is probably now removed to the Louvre. The Vendéans are presented there in all their simplicity of attire, and devoted valour; the priests who attended them displaying their crosses, and encouraging the assault, which is, on the other hand, repelled by the regular steadiness of the Republican forces. [This picture is still in the Luxembourg. The paintings of living artists are never admitted to the Louvre.]

carrying on the war. Pitt was extremely unwilling to interfere with the internal government of France. He desired to see the barrier of Flanders, so foolishly thrown open by the Emperor Joseph, again reestablished, and he hoped from the success of the allied arms, that this might be attained,—that the French lust for attacking their neighbours might be ended—their wildness for crusading in the cause of innovation checked, and some political advances to a regular government effected. On the other hand, the enthusiastic, ingenious, but somewhat extravagant opinions of Windham, led him to espouse those of Burke in their utmost extent; and he recommended to England, as to Europe, the replacing the Bourbons, with the ancient royal government and constitution, as the fundamental principle on which the war should be waged. This variance of opinion so far divided the British counsels, that, as it proved, no sufficient efforts were made, either on the one line of conduct or the other.

Indeed, Madame La Roche-Jacquelein (who, however, we are apt to think, has been in some degree misled in her account of that matter) says, the only despatches received by the Vendéans from the British Cabinet, indicated a singular ignorance of the state of La Vendée, which was certainly near enough to Jersey and Guernsey, to have afforded the means of obtaining accurate information upon the nature and principles of the Vendéan insurrection.

The leaders of *The Royal and Catholic Army* received their first communication from Britain

through a Royalist emissary, the Chevalier de Tinténiac, who carried them concealed in the wadding of his pistols, addressed to a supposed chief named Gaston, whose name had scarce been known among them. In this document they were required to say for what purpose they were in arms, whether in behalf of the old government, or of the constitution of 1791, or the principles of the Girondists? These were strange questions to be asked of men who had been in the field as pure Royalists for more than five months, who might have reasonably hoped that the news of their numerous and important victories had resounded through all Europe, but must at least have expected they should be well known to those neighbours of France who were at war with her present government. Assistance was promised, but in a general and indecisive way; nor did the testimony of M. de Tinténiac give his friends much assurance that it was seriously proposed. In fact, no support ever arrived until after the first pacification of La Vendée. The ill-fated expedition to Quiberon, delayed until the cause of royalty was nigh hopeless, was at length undertaken, when its only consequence was that of involving in absolute destruction a multitude of brave and high-spirited men. But on looking back on a game so doubtful, it is easy to criticise the conduct of the players; and perhaps no blunder in war or politics is so common, as that which arises from missing the proper moment of exertion.[1]

[1] [La Roche-Jacquelein, p. 69; Lacretelle, t. x. p. 143.]

The French, although more able to seize the advantageous opportunity than we, (for their government being always in practice something despotic, is at liberty to act more boldly, secretly, and decisively, than that of England,) are nevertheless chargeable with similar errors. If the English Cabinet missed the opportunities given by the insurrection of La Vendée, the French did not more actively improve those afforded by the Irish rebellion; and if we had to regret the too tardy and unhappy expedition to Quiberon, they in their turn might repent having thrown away the troops whom they landed at Castlehaven, after the pacification of Ireland, for the sole purpose, it would seem, of surrendering at Ballinamuck.

It is yet more wonderful, that a country whose dispositions were so loyal, and its local advantages so strong, should not have been made by the loyalists in general the centre of those counter-revolutionary exertions which were vainly expended on the iron eastern frontier, where the fine army of Condé wasted their blood about paltry frontier redoubts and fortresses. The nobles and gentlemen of France, fighting abreast with the gallant peasants of La Vendée, inspired with the same sentiments of loyalty with themselves, would have been more suitably placed than in the mercenary ranks of foreign nations. It is certain that the late King Louis XVIII., and also his present Majesty,[1] were desirous to have exposed their persons in the war of La Vendée. The former wrote

[1] [King Charles the Tenth.]

to the Duke d'Harcourt—"What course remains for me but La Vendée? Who can place me there?—England—Insist upon that point; and tell the English ministers in my name, that I demand from them a crown or a tomb."[1] If there were a serious intention of supporting these unfortunate princes, the means of this experiment ought to have been afforded them, and that upon no stinted scale. The error of England, through all the early part of the war, was an unwillingness to proportion her efforts to the importance of the ends she had in view.

Looking upon the various chances which might have befriended the unparalleled exertions of the Vendéans, considering the generous, virtuous, and disinterested character of those primitive soldiers, it is with sincere sorrow that we proceed to trace their extermination by the bloodthirsty ruffians of the Reign of Terror. Yet the course of Providence, after the lapse of time, is justified even in our weak and undiscerning eyes. We should indeed have read with hearts throbbing with the just feelings of gratified vengeance, that La Charette or La Roche-Jacquelein had successfully achieved, at the head of their gallant adherents, the road to Paris—had broke in upon the committees of public safety and public security, like Thalaba the Destroyer[2] into the Dom-daniel; and with the same dreadful result to the agents of the horrors with which these revolutionary bodies had deluged France. But such a reaction, accomplished solely for the purpose of re-

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 145.] [2] [See Southey's Thalaba, b. 12.]

storing the old despotic monarchy, could not have brought peace to France or to Europe; nay, could only have laid a foundation for farther and more lasting quarrels. The flame of liberty had been too widely spread in France to be quenched even by such a triumph of royalty as we have supposed, however pure the principles and high the spirit of the Vendéans. It was necessary that the nation should experience both the extremes of furious license and of stern despotism, to fix the hopes of the various contending parties upon a form of government, in which a limited power in the monarch should be united to the enjoyment of all rational freedom in the subject. We return to our sad task.

Notwithstanding the desolating mode in which the Republicans conducted the war, with the avowed purpose of rendering La Vendée uninhabitable, the population seemed to increase in courage, and even in numbers, as their situation became more desperate. Renewed armies were sent into the devoted district, and successively destroyed in assaults, skirmishes, and ambuscades, where they were not slaughtered in general actions. More than a hundred thousand men were employed at one time, in their efforts to subjugate this devoted province. But this could not last for ever; and a chance of war upon the frontiers, which threatened reverses to the Convention, compensated them by furnishing new forces, and of a higher description in point of character and discipline, for the subjection of La Vendée.

This was the surrender of the town of Mentz to

the Prussians. By the capitulation, a garrison of near fifteen thousand experienced soldiers, and some officers of considerable name, were debarred from again bearing arms against the allies. These troops were employed in La Vendée, where the scale had already begun to preponderate against the dauntless and persevering insurgents. At the first encounters, the soldiers of Mentz, unacquainted with the Vendéan mode of fighting, sustained loss, and were thought lightly of by the Royalists.[1] This opinion of their new adversaries was changed, in consequence of a defeat [Oct. 17] near Chollet, more dreadful in its consequences than any which the Vendéans had yet received, and which determined their generals to pass the Loire with their whole collected force, leave their beloved Bocage to the axes and brands of the victors, and carry the war into Bretagne, where they expected either to be supported by a descent of the English, or by a general insurrection of the inhabitants.[2]

In this military emigration the Royalists were accompanied by their aged people, their wives, and their children; so that their melancholy march resembled that of the Cimbrians or Helvetians of old, when abandoning their ancient dwellings, they wandered forth to find new settlements in a more fertile land. They crossed the river near Saint Florent, and the banks were blackened with nearly

[1] They punned on the word *Mayence* (Mentz), and said, the newly arrived Republicans were soldiers of *fayence* (potter's ware), which could not endure the fire.

[2] [Beauchamp, Hist. de la Guerre de la Vendée, t. ii. p. 99; Jomini, t. iv. p. 318; La Roche-Jacquelein, p. 239; Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 151.]

a hundred thousand pilgrims of both sexes, and of every age. The broad river was before them, and behind them their burning cottages and the exterminating sword of the Republicans. The means of embarkation were few and precarious; the affright of the females almost ungovernable; and such was the tumult and terror of the scene, that, in the words of Madame La Roche-Jacquelein, the awe-struck spectators could only compare it to the day of judgment.[1] Without food, directions, or organization of any kind—without the show of an army, saving in the front and rear of the column, the centre consisting of their defenceless families marching together in a mass—these indomitable peasants defeated a Republican army under the walls of Laval.

The garrison of Mentz, whose arrival in La Vendée had been so fatal to the insurgents, and who had pursued them in a state of rout, as they thought, out of their own country, across the Loire, were almost exterminated in this most unexpected defeat. An unsuccessful attack upon Granville more than counterbalanced this advantage, and although the Vendéans afterwards obtained a brilliant victory at Dol, it was the last success of what was termed the Great Army of La Vendée, and which well deserved that title, on more accounts than in its more ordinary sense. They had now lost, by the chances of war, most of their best chiefs; and misfortunes, and the exasperating feelings attending them, had introduced disunion, which had

[1] [Mémoires, p. 240.]

been so long a stranger to their singular association. Charette was reflected upon as being little willing to aid La Roche-Jacquelein; and Stoflet seems to have set up an independent standard. The insurgents were defeated at Mons, where of three Republican generals of name, Westerman, Marçeau, and Kleber, the first disgraced himself by savage cruelty, and the other two gained honour by their clemency. Fifteen thousand male and female natives of La Vendée perished in the battle and the massacre which ensued.[1]

But though La Vendée, after this decisive loss, which included some of her best troops and bravest generals, could hardly be said to exist, La Charette continued, with indefatigable diligence, and undaunted courage, to sustain the insurrection of Lower Poitou and Bretagne. He was followed by a division of peasants from the Marais, whose activity in marshy grounds gave them similar advantages to those possessed by the Vendéans in their woodlands. He was followed also by the inhabitants of Morbihan, called, from their adherence to royalism, the Little La Vendée. He was the leader, besides, of many of the bands called Chouans, a name of doubtful origin given to the insurgents of Bretagne, but which their courage has rendered celebrated.[2] La Charette himself, who, with these and other forces, continued to

[1] [Jomini, t. iv. p. 319; Beauchamp, t. ii. p. 102.]

[2] Some derived it from *Chat-huant*, as if the insurgents, like owls, appeared chiefly at night; others traced it to *Chouin*, the name of two brothers, sons of a blacksmith, said to have been the earliest leaders of the Breton insurgents.

sustain the standard of royalty in Bretagne and Poitou, was one of those extraordinary characters, made to shine amidst difficulties and dangers. As prudent and cautious as he was courageous and adventurous, he was at the same time so alert and expeditious in his motions, that he usually appeared at the time and place where his presence was least expected and most formidable. A Republican officer, who had just taken possession of a village, and was speaking of the Royalist leader as of a person at twenty leagues' distance, said publicly,— "I should like to see this famous Charette."— "There he is," said a woman, pointing with her finger. In fact, he was at that moment in the act of charging the Republican troops, who were all either slain or made prisoners.

After the fall of Robespierre, the Convention made offers of pacification to La Charette, which were adjusted betwixt the Vendéan chief and General Canclaux,[1] the heroic defender of Nantes. The articles of treaty were subscribed in that place, which La Charette entered at the head of his military staff, with his long white plume streaming in the wind. He heard with coldness shouts of welcome from a city, to which his name had been long a terror; and there was a gloom on his brow as he signed his name to the articles agreed upon. He certainly suspected the faith of those with whom he transacted, and they did not by any means con-

[1] [Canclaux was born at Paris in 1740. After the revolution of the 18th Brumaire, Napoleon gave him the command of the 14th military division, and made him a senator. At the restoration he was created a peer. He died in 1817.]

fide in his. An armistice was agreed on until the Convention should ratify the pacification. But this never took place. Mutual complaints and recriminations followed, and the soldiers of La Charette and of the Republic began once more to make a petty war on each other.

Mean time, that party in the British Cabinet which declared for a descent on France, in name and on behalf of the successor to the crown, had obtained the acquiescence of their colleagues in an experiment of this nature; but unhappily it had been postponed until its success had become impossible. The force, too, which composed this experimental operation, was injudiciously selected. A certain proportion consisted of emigrants, in whom the highest confidence might be with justice reposed; but about two battalions of this invading expedition were vagrant foreigners of various descriptions, many or most of them enlisted from among the prisoners of war, who readily took any engagement to get out of captivity, with the mental resolution of breaking it the first opportunity. Besides these imprudences, the purpose and time of executing a project, which, to be successful, should have been secret and sudden, were generally known in France and England before the expedition weighed anchor.

The event, as is universally known, was most disastrous: The mercenaries deserted to the Republicans as soon as they got ashore; and the unfortunate emigrants, who became prisoners in great numbers, were condemned and executed without mercy. The ammunition and muskets, of which a

quantity had been landed, fell into the hands of the enemy; and what was worse, England did not, among other lighter losses, entirely save her honour. She was severely censured as giving up her allies to destruction, because she had yielded to the wishes which enthusiastic and courageous men had elevated into hope.

Nothing, indeed, can be more difficult, than to state the just extent of support which can prudently be extended by one nation to a civil faction in the bosom of another. Indeed, nothing short of success —absolute success—will prove the justification of such enterprises in the eyes of some, who will allege, in the event of failure, that men have been enticed into perils, in which they have not been adequately supported; or of others, who will condemn such measures as squandering the public resources, in enterprises which ought not to have been encouraged at all. But in fair judgment, the expedition of Quiberon ought not to be summarily condemned. It was neither inadequate, nor, excepting as to the description of some of the forces employed, ill calculated for the service proposed. Had such reinforcements and supplies arrived while the Royalists were attacking Nantes or Grenoble, or while they yet held the island of Noirmoutier, the good consequences to the royal cause might have been incalculable. But the expedition was ill-timed, and that was in a great measure owing to those unfortunate gentlemen engaged, who, impatient of inactivity, and sanguine by character, urged the British Ministry, or rather Mr Windham, to authorize the experiment, without fully considering more than

their own zeal and courage. We cannot, however, go so far as to say, that their impatience relieved ministers from the responsibility attached to the indifferent intelligence on which they acted. There could be no difficulty in getting full information on the state of Bretagne by way of Jersey; and they ought to have known that there was a strong French force collected from various garrisons, for the purpose of guarding against a descent at Quiberon.[1]

After this unfortunate affair, and some subsequent vain attempts to throw in supplies on the part of the English, La Charette still continued in open war. But Hoche, an officer of high reputation, was now sent into the disturbed districts, with a larger army than had yet been employed against them. He was thus enabled to form movable columns, which acted in concert, supporting each other when unsuccessful, or completing each other's victory when such was obtained. La Charette, after his band was almost entirely destroyed, was himself made prisoner. Being condemned to be shot, he refused to have his eyes covered, and died

[1] We can and ought to make great allowances for national feeling; yet it is a little hard to find a well-informed historian, like M. Lacretelle, [t. xi. p. 146,] gravely insinuate, that England threw the unfortunate Royalists on the coast of Quiberon to escape the future burden of maintaining them. Her liberality towards the emigrants, honourable and meritorious to the country, was entirely gratuitous. She might have withdrawn when she pleased a bounty conferred by her benevolence; and it is rather too hard to be supposed capable of meditating their murder, merely to save the expense of supporting them. The expedition was a blunder; but one in which the unfortunate sufferers contributed to mislead the British Government.

as courageously as he had lived. With him and Stoflet, who suffered a similar fate, the war of La Vendée terminated.

To trace this remarkable civil war, even so slightly as we have attempted the task, has carried us beyond the course of our narrative. It broke out in the beginning of March, 1793, and La Charette's execution, by which it was closed, took place at Nantes, 29th March, 1796. The astonishing part of the matter is, that so great a conflagration should not have extended itself beyond a certain limited district, while within that region it raged with such fury, that for a length of time no means of extinguishing it could be discovered.

We now return to the state of France in spring 1793, when the Jacobins, who had possessed themselves of the supreme power of the Republic, found that they had to contend, not only with the allied forces on two frontiers of France, and with the Royalists in the west, but also with more than one of the great commercial towns, which, with less inclination to the monarchical cause, than a general terror of revolutionary measures, prepared for resistance, after the proscription of the Girondists upon the 31st of May.

Bourdeaux, Marseilles, Toulon, and Lyons, had declared themselves against the Jacobin supremacy. Rich from commerce and their maritime situation, and, in the case of Lyons, from their command of internal navigation, the wealthy merchants and

manufacturers of those cities foresaw the total insecurity of property, and in consequence their own ruin, in the system of arbitrary spoliation and murder upon which the government of the Jacobins was founded. But property, for which they were solicitous, though, if its natural force is used in time, the most powerful barrier to withstand revolution, becomes, after a certain period of delay, its most helpless victim. If the rich are in due season liberal of their means, they have the power of enlisting in their cause, and as adherents, those among the lower orders, who, if they see their superiors dejected and despairing, will be tempted to consider them as objects of plunder. But this must be done early, or those who might be made the most active defenders of property will join with such as are prepared to make a prey of it.

We have already seen that Bourdeaux, in which the Brissotines or Girondists had ventured to hope for a zeal purely republican, at once adverse to royalty and to Jacobin domination, had effectually disappointed their expectations, and succumbed with little struggle under the ferocious victors.

Marseilles showed at once her good-will and her impotency of means. The utmost exertions of that wealthy city, whose revolutionary band had contributed so much to the downfall of the monarchy in the attack on the Tuileries, were able to equip only a small and doubtful army of about three thousand men, who were despatched to the relief of Lyons. This inconsiderable army threw themselves into Avignon, and were defeated with the utmost ease,

by the republican general Cartaux,[1] despicable as a military officer, and whose forces would not have stood a single *également* of the Vendéan sharp-shooters. Marseilles received the victors, and bowed her head to the subsequent horrors which it pleased Cartaux, with two formidable Jacobins, Barras and Fréron,[2] to inflict on that flourishing city. The place underwent the usual terrors of Jacobin purification, and was for a time affectedly called, "the nameless commune."[3]

Lyons made a more honourable stand. That noble city had been subjected for some time to the domination of Châlier, one of the most ferocious, and at the same time one of the most extravagantly absurd, of the Jacobins. He was at the head of a formidable club, which was worthy of being affiliated

[1] ["This man, originally a painter, had become an adjutant in the Parisian corps; he was afterwards employed in the army; and, having been successful against the Marseillois, the deputies of the Mountain had, in the same day, obtained him the appointments of brigadier-general and general of division. He was extremely ignorant, and had nothing military about him, otherwise he was not ill disposed."—NAPOLEON, *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 19.]

[2] [Stanislaus Fréron was son of the well-known victim of Voltaire, and god-son of the unfortunate King of Poland. He accompanied the French expedition to St Domingo in 1802, and being appointed sub-prefect at the Cayes, soon sunk under the influence of the climate. His portfolio falling into the hands of the black government, some of its contents were published by the authority of Dessaline, and subjoined to a work entitled "Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Hayti." Among them are several amatory epistles from Napoleon's second sister Pauline, by which it appears that Fréron was the earliest object of her choice, but that Napoleon and Josephine would not hear of an alliance with the friend of Robespierre, and ready instrument of his atrocities.]

[3] [Jomini, t. iv. p. 208; Toulongeon, t. iv. p. 63.]

with the mother society, and ambitious of treading in its footsteps; and he was supported by a garrison of two revolutionary regiments, besides a numerous artillery, and a large addition of volunteers, amounting in all to about ten thousand men, forming what was called a revolutionary army. This Châlier was an apostate priest, an atheist, and a thorough-paced pupil in the school of terror. He had been created Procureur of the Commune, and had imposed on the wealthy citizens a tax, which was raised from six to thirty millions of livres. But blood as well as gold was his object. The massacre of a few priests and aristocrats confined in the fortress of Pierre-Scize, was a pitiful sacrifice; and Châlier, ambitious of deeds more decisive, caused a general arrest of an hundred principal citizens, whom he destined as a hetacomb more worthy of the demon whom he served.

This sacrifice was prevented by the courage of the Lyonnois; a courage which, if assumed by the Parisians, might have prevented most of the horrors which disgraced the Revolution. The meditated slaughter was already announced by Châlier to the Jacobin Club. "Three hundred heads," he said, "are marked for slaughter. Let us lose no time in seizing the members of the departmental office-bearers, the presidents and secretaries of the sections, all the local authorities who obstruct our revolutionary measures. Let us make one fagot of the whole, and deliver them at once to the guillotine."

But ere he could execute his threat, terror was awakened into the courage of despair. The citi-

zens rose in arms, [May 29,] and besieged the Hôtel de Ville, in which Châlier, with his revolutionary troops, made a desperate, and for some time a successful, yet ultimately a vain defence. But the Lyonnois unhappily knew not how to avail themselves of their triumph. They were not sufficiently aware of the nature of the vengeance which they had provoked, or of the necessity of supporting the bold step which they had taken, by measures which precluded a compromise. Their resistance to the violence and atrocity of the Jacobins had no political character, any more than that offered by the traveller against robbers who threaten him with plunder and murder. They were not sufficiently aware, that, having done so much, they must necessarily do more. They ought, by declaring themselves Royalists, to have endeavoured to prevail on the troops of Savoy, if not on the Swiss, who had embraced a species of neutrality, (which, after the 10th of August, was dishonourable to their ancient reputation,) to send in all haste soldiery to the assistance of a city which had no fortifications or regular troops to defend it; but which possessed, nevertheless, treasures to pay their auxiliaries, and strong hands and able officers to avail themselves of the localities of their situation, which, when well defended, are sometimes as formidable as the regular protection erected by scientific engineers.

The people of Lyons vainly endeavoured to establish a revolutionary character for themselves, upon the system of the Gironde; two of whose proscribed deputies, Biroteau and Chasset, tried to

draw them over to their unpopular and hopeless cause; and they inconsistently sought protection by affecting a republican zeal, even while resisting the decrees, and defeating the troops, of the Jacobins. There were undoubtedly many of royalist principles among the insurgents, and some of their leaders were decidedly such; but these were not numerous or influential enough to establish the true principle of open resistance, and the ultimate chance of rescue, by a bold proclamation of the King's interest. They still appealed to the Convention as their legitimate sovereign, in whose eyes they endeavoured to vindicate themselves, and at the same time tried to secure the interest of two Jacobin deputies, who had countenanced every violence attempted by Châlier, that they might prevail upon them to represent their conduct favourably. Of course they had enough of promises to this effect, while Messrs Guathier and Nioche, the deputies in question, remained in their power; promises, doubtless, the more readily given, that the Lyonnois, though desirous to conciliate the favour of the Convention, did not hesitate in proceeding to the punishment of the Jacobin Châlier. He was condemned and executed, along with one of his principal associates, termed Ribard.[1]

To defend these vigorous proceedings, the unhappy insurgents placed themselves under the interim government of a council, who, still desirous to temporize and maintain the revolutionary character, termed themselves "The Popular and

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 98; Thiers, t. iv. p. 161.]

Republican Commission of Public Safety of the Department of the Rhone and Loire;" a title which, while it excited no popular enthusiasm, and attracted no foreign aid, noways soothed, but rather exasperated, the resentment of the Convention, now under the absolute domination of the Jacobins, by whom every thing short of complete fraternization was accounted presumptuous defiance. Those who were not with them, it was their policy to hold as their most decided enemies.

The Lyonnois had, indeed, letters of encouragement, and promised concurrence, from several departments; but no effectual support was ever directed towards their city, excepting the petty reinforcement from Marseilles, which we have seen was intercepted and dispersed with little trouble by the Jacobin General Cartaux.

Lyons had expected to become the patroness and focus of an Anti-jacobin league, formed by the great commercial towns, against Paris and the predominant part of the Convention. She found herself isolated and unsupported, and left to oppose her own proper forces and means of defence, to an army of sixty thousand men, and to the numerous Jacobins contained within her own walls. About the end of July, after a lapse of an interval of two months, a regular blockade was formed around the city, and in the first week of August hostilities took place. The besieging army was directed in its military character by General Kellerman, who, with other distinguished soldiers, had now begun to hold an eminent rank in the Repub-

lican armies. But for the purpose of executing the vengeance for which they thirsted, the Jacobins relied chiefly on the exertions of the deputies they had sent along with the commander, and especially of the representative Dubois-Crancé, a man whose sole merit appears to have been his frantic Jacobinism. General Précy, formerly an officer in the royal service, undertook the almost hopeless task of defence, and by forming redoubts on the most commanding situations around the town, commenced a resistance against the immensely superior force of the besiegers, which was honourable if it could have been useful. The Lyonnois, at the same time, still endeavoured to make fair weather with the besieging army, by representing themselves as firm Republicans. They celebrated as a public festival the anniversary of the 10th of August, while Dubois Crancé, to show the credit he gave them for their republican zeal, fixed the same day for commencing his fire on the place, and caused the first gun to be discharged by his own concubine, a female born in Lyons. Bombs and red-hot bullets were next resorted to, against the second city of the French empire; while the besieged sustained the attack with a constancy, and on many parts repelled it with a courage, highly honourable to their character.

But their fate was determined. The deputies announced to the Convention their purpose of pouring their instruments of havoc on every quarter of the town at once, and when it was on fire in several places to attempt a general storm. "The

city," they said, "must surrender, or there shall not remain one stone upon another, and this we hope to accomplish in spite of the suggestions of false compassion. Do not then be surprised when you shall hear that Lyons exists no longer." The fury of the attack threatened to make good these promises.

In the mean time the Piedmontese troops made a show of descending from their mountains to the succour of the city, and it is probable their interference would have given a character of royalism to the insurrection. But the incursion of the Piedmontese and Sardinians was speedily repelled by the skill of Kellerman, and produced no effect in favour of the city of Lyons, except that of supporting for a time the courage of its defenders.

The sufferings of the citizens became intolerable. Several quarters of the city were on fire at the same time, immense magazines were burnt to the ground, and a loss incurred, during two nights' bombardment, which was calculated at two hundred millions of livres. A black flag was hoisted by the besieged on the Great Hospital, as a sign that the fire of the assailants should not be directed on that asylum of hopeless misery. The signal seemed only to draw the republican bombs to the spot where they could create the most frightful distress, and outrage in the highest degree the feelings of humanity. The devastations of famine were soon added to those of slaughter; and after two months of such horrors had been sustained, it became obvious that farther resistance was impossible.

The military commandant of Lyons, Précy,

resolved upon a sally, at the head of the active part of the garrison, hoping that, by cutting his way through the besiegers, he might save the lives of many of those who followed him in the desperate attempt, and gain the neutral territory of Switzerland, while the absence of those who had been actual combatants during the siege, might, in some degree, incline the Convention to lenient measures towards the more helpless part of the inhabitants. A column of about two thousand men made this desperate attempt. But pursued by the Republicans, and attacked on every side by the peasants, to whom they had been represented in the most odious colours by the Jacobin deputies, and who were stimulated besides by the hope of plunder, scarcely fifty of the devoted body reached, with their leader, the protecting soil of Switzerland. Lyons reluctantly opened her gates after the departure of her best and bravest. The rest may be described in the words of Horace,—

> " Barbarus heu cineres insistet victor, et urbem,
> ——————dissipabit insolens."

The paralytic Couthon, with Collot D'Herbois,[1] and other deputies, were sent to Lyons by the Committee of Public Safety, to execute the vengeance which the Jacobins demanded; while Dubois Crancé was recalled for having put, it was thought, less energy in his proceedings than the

[1] [Before the arrival of Collot d'Herbois, Fouché (afterwards Duke of Otranto) issued a decree, directing that all religious emblems should be destroyed, and that the words " Death is an eternal sleep ! " should be placed over the entrance of every burial ground.—See *Moniteur*, Nos. 57, 64.]

prosecution of the siege required. Collot D'Herbois had a personal motive of a singular nature for delighting in the task intrusted to him and his colleagues. In his capacity of a play-actor, he had been hissed from the stage at Lyons, and the door to revenge was now open. The instructions of this committee enjoined them to take the most satisfactory revenge for the death of Châlier, and the insurrection of Lyons, not merely on the citizens, but on the town itself. The principal streets and buildings were to be levelled with the ground, and a monument erected where they stood, was to record the cause;—"*Lyons rebelled against the Republic—Lyons is no more.*" Such fragments of the town as might be permitted to remain were to bear the name of *Commune Affranchie.* It will scarcely be believed, that a doom like that which might have passed the lips of some Eastern despot, in all the frantic madness of arbitrary power and utter ignorance, could have been seriously pronounced, and as seriously enforced in one of the most civilized nations in Europe; and that in the present enlightened age, men who pretended to wisdom and philosophy, should have considered the labours of the architect as a proper subject of punishment. So it was, however; and to give the demolition more effect, the impotent Couthon was carried from house to house, devoting each to ruin, by striking the door with a silver hammer, and pronouncing these words—"House of a rebel, I condemn thee in the name of the Law." Workmen followed in great multitudes, who executed the sentence by pulling the house down to the founda-

tions. This wanton demolition continued for six months, and is said to have been carried on at an expense equal to that which the superb military hospital, the Hôtel des Invalides, cost its founder, Louis XIV. But republican vengeance did not waste itself exclusively upon senseless lime and stone—it sought out sentient victims.

The deserved death of Châlier had been atoned by an apotheosis,[1] executed after Lyons had surrendered; but Collot D'Herbois declared that every drop of that patriotic blood fell as if scalding his own heart, and that the murder demanded atonement. All ordinary process, and every usual mode of execution, was thought too tardy to avenge the death of a Jacobin proconsul. The judges of the revolutionary commission were worn out with fatigue—the arm of the executioner was weary—the very steel of the guillotine was blunted. Collot d'Herbois devised a more summary mode of slaughter. A number of from two to three hundred victims at once were dragged from prison to the Place de Brotteaux, one of the largest squares in Lyons, and there subjected to a fire of grape-shot.[2]

[1] [An ass formed a conspicuous part of the procession, having a mitre fastened between his ears, and dragging in the dirt a Bible tied to its tail; which Bible was afterwards burnt, and its ashes scattered to the winds. Fouché wrote to the Convention —"The shade of Châlier is satisfied. Yes, we swear that the people shall be avenged. Our severe courage shall keep pace with their just impatience."—*Moniteur*. Montgaillard, t. iv. pp. 113, 138.]

[2] [Fouché, on the 19th December, wrote to Collot d'Herbois —"Let us show ourselves terrible: let us annihilate in our wrath, and at one blow, every conspirator, every traitor, that we may not feel the pain, the long torture, of punishing them as

Efficacious as this mode of execution may seem, it was neither speedy nor merciful. The sufferers fell to the ground like singed flies, mutilated but not slain, and imploring their executioners to despatch them speedily. This was done with sabres and bayonets, and with such haste and zeal, that some of the jailers and assistants were slain along with those whom they had assisted in dragging to death; and the mistake was not discerned, until, upon counting the dead bodies, the military murderers found them amount to more than the destined tale. The bodies of the dead were thrown into the Rhone, to carry news of the Republican vengeance, as Collot d'Herbois expressed himself, to Toulon, then also in a state of revolt. But the sullen stream rejected the office imposed on it, and heaved back the dead in heaps upon the banks; and the Committee of Representatives were compelled at length to allow the relics of their cruelty to be interred, to prevent the risk of contagion.[1]

The people of the south of France have always been distinguished by the vivacity of their temperament. As cruelties beget retaliation, it may be as well here mentioned, that upon the fall of the Jacobins, the people of Lyons forgot not what indeed was calculated for eternal remembrance, and took

kings would do. We this evening send two hundred and thirteen rebels before the thunder of our cannon. Farewell, my friend! tears of joy stream from my eyes, and overflow my heart.—(Signed) FOUCHÉ."—*Moniteur*, No. 85.]

[1] [Guillon de Montléon, Mémoires pour servir à l'Hist. de la Ville de Lyon, t. ii. p. 405; Toulongeon, t. iv. p. 68; Jomini, t. iv. p. 186; Thiers, t. v. p. 310; Lacretelle, t. ix. p. 109.]

by violence a severe and sanguinary vengeance on those who had been accessary to the atrocities of Couthon and Collot d'Herbois. They rose on the Jacobins after the fall of Robespierre, and put to death several of them.

Toulon, important by its port, its arsenals, and naval-yard, as well as by its fortifications both on the sea and land side, had partaken deeply in the feelings which pervaded Marseilles, Bourdeaux, and Lyons. But the insurgents of Toulon were determinedly royalist. The place had been for some time subjected to the administration of a Jacobin club, and had seen the usual quantity of murders and excesses with the greater pain, that the town contained many naval officers and others who had served under the King, and retained their affection for the royal cause. Their dissatisfaction did not escape the notice of men, to whom every sullen look was cause of suspicion, and the slightest cause of suspicion a ground of death. The town being threatened with a complete purification after the Jacobin fashion, the inhabitants resolved to anticipate the blow.

At the dead of night the tocsin was sounded by the citizens, who dispersed the Jacobin club, seized on the two representatives who had governed its proceedings, arrested seven or eight Jacobins, who had been most active in the previous assassinations, and, in spite of some opposition, actually executed them. With more decision than the inhabitants of Lyons, they proceeded to proclaim Louis XVII. under the constitution of 1791. Cartaux presently marched upon the insurgent city,

driving before him the Marseillois, whom, as before mentioned, he had defeated upon their march towards Lyons. Alarmed at this movement, and destitute of a garrison which they could trust, the Toulonnois implored the assistance of the English and Spanish admirals, Lord Hood and Gravina, who were cruising off their port. It was instantly granted, and marines were sent on shore for their immediate protection, while efforts were made to collect from the different allied powers such a supply of troops as could be immediately thrown into the place. But the event of the siege of Toulon brings our general historical sketch into connexion with the life of that wonderful person, whose actions we have undertaken to record. It was during this siege that the light was first distinguished, which, broadening more and more, and blazing brighter and brighter, was at length to fill with its lustre the whole hemisphere of Europe, and was then to set with a rapidity equal to that with which it had arisen.

Ere, however, we produce this first-rate actor upon the stage, we must make the reader still more particularly acquainted with the spirit of the scene.

CHAPTER XVI.

Views of the British Cabinet regarding the French Revolution.—Extraordinary Situation of France.—Explanation of the Anomaly which it exhibited.—System of Terror.—Committee of Public Safety—Of Public Security.—David the Painter.—Law against suspected Persons.—Revolutionary Tribunal.—Effects of the Emigration of the Princes and Nobles.—Causes of the Passiveness of the French People under the Tyranny of the Jacobins.—Singular Address of the Committee of Public Safety.—General Reflections.

It has been a maxim with great statesmen, that evil governments must end by becoming their own destruction, according to the maxim, *Res nolunt diù male administrari.* Pitt himself was of opinion, that the fury of the French Revolution would wear itself out; and that it already presented so few of the advantages and privileges of social compact, that it seemed as if its political elements must either altogether dissolve, or assume a new form more similar to that on which all other states and governments rest their stability. It was on this account that this great English statesman declined assisting, in plain and open terms, the royal cause, and desired to keep England free from any pledge concerning the future state of government in France, aware of the danger of involving her in any declared and

avowed interference with the right of a people to choose their own system. However anxious to prevent the revolutionary opinions, as well as arms, from extending beyond their own frontier, it was thought in the British Cabinet, by one large party, that the present frantic excess of Republican principles must, of itself, produce a reaction in favour of more moderate sentiments. Some steady system for the protection of life and property, was, it was said, essential to the very existence of society. The French nation must assume such, and renounce the prosecution of those revolutionary doctrines, for the sake of their own as well as of other countries. The arrangement must, it was thought, take place, from the inevitable course of human affairs, which, however they may fluctuate, are uniformly determined at length by the interest of the parties concerned.

Such was the principle assumed by many great statesmen, whose sagacity was unhappily baffled by the event. In fact, it was calculating upon the actions and personal exertions of a raving madman, as if he had been under the regulation of his senses, and acting upon principles of self-regard and self-preservation. France continued not only to subsist, but to be victorious, without a government, unless the revolutionary committees and Jacobin clubs could be accounted such—for the Convention was sunk into a mere engine of that party, and sanctioned whatever they proposed; without religion, which, as we shall see, they formally abolished; without municipal laws or rights, except that any one of the ruling party might do what mischief he

would, while citizens, less distinguished for patriotism, were subjected, for any cause, or no cause, to loss of liberty, property, and life itself; without military discipline, for officers might be dragged from their regiments, and generals from their armies, on the information of their own soldiers; without revenues of state, for the depression of the assignats was extreme; without laws, for there were no ordinary tribunals left to appeal to; without colonies, ships, manufactories, or commerce; without fine arts, any more than those which were useful;—in short, France continued to subsist, and to achieve victories, although apparently forsaken of God, and deprived of all the ordinary resources of human wisdom.

The whole system of society, indeed, seemed only to retain some appearances of cohesion from mere habit, the same which makes trained horses draw up in something like order, even without their riders, if the trumpet is sounded. And yet in foreign wars, notwithstanding the deplorable state of the interior, the Republic was not only occasionally, but permanently and triumphantly victorious. She was like the champion in Berni's romance, who was so delicately sliced asunder by one of the Paladins, that he went on fighting, and slew other warriors, without discovering for a length of time that he was himself killed.

All this extraordinary energy, was, in one word, the effect of TERROR. Death—a grave—are sounds which awaken the strongest efforts in those whom they menace. There was never any where, save in France during this melancholy period, so awful a

comment on the expression of Scripture, "All that a man hath he will give for his life." Force, immediate and irresistible force, was the only logic used by the government—Death was the only appeal from their authority—the Guillotine [1] the all-sufficing argument, which settled each debate betwixt them and the governed.

Was the exchequer low, the Guillotine filled it with the effects of the wealthy, who were judged aristocratical, in exact proportion to the extent of their property. Were these supplies insufficient, diminished as they were by peculation ere they reached the public coffers, the assignats remained, which might be multiplied to any quantity. Did the paper medium of circulation fall in the market to fifty under the hundred, the Guillotine was ready to punish those who refused to exchange it at par. A few examples of such jobbers in the public funds made men glad to give one hundred franks for state money, which they knew to be worth no more than fifty. Was bread awanting, corn was to be found by the same compendious means, and distributed among the Parisians, as among the ancient citizens of Rome, at a regulated price. The Guillotine was a key to storehouses, barns, and granaries.

Did the army want recruits, the Guillotine was

[1] [The Convention having, by a decree of the 17th March, 1792, come to the determination to substitute decapitation for hanging, this instrument was adopted, on the proposition of Dr Guillotin, an eminent physician of Paris; who regretted to the hour of his death, in 1814, that his name should have been thus associated with the instrument of so many horrors. He had devised it with a view to humanity.]

ready to exterminate all conscripts who should hesitate to march. On the generals of the Republican army, this decisive argument, which, *à priori*, might have been deemed less applicable, in all its rigour, to them than to others, was possessed of the most exclusive authority. They were beheaded for want of success, which may seem less different from the common course of affairs;[1] but they were also guillotined when their successes were not improved to the full expectations of their masters.[2] Nay, they were guillotined, when, being too successful, they were suspected of having acquired over the soldiers who had conquered under them, an interest dangerous to those who had the command of this all-sufficing reason of state.[3] Even mere mediocrity, and a limited but regular discharge of duty, neither so brilliant as to incur jealousy, nor so important as to draw down censure, was no protection.[4] There was no rallying point

[1] The fate of Custine illustrates this,—a general who had done much for the Republic, and who, when his fortune began to fail him, excused himself by saying, "Fortune was a woman, and his hairs were growing grey." [He was guillotined in August 1793.]

[2] Witness Houchard, who performed the distinguished service of raising the siege of Dunkirk, and who, during his trial, could be hardly made to understand that he was to suffer for not carrying his victory still farther. [Guillotined, Nov. 1793.]

[3] Several generals of reputation sustained capital punishment, from no other reason than the jealousy of the committees of their influence with the army.

[4] Luckner, an old German thick-headed soldier, who was of no party, and scrupulously obeyed the command of whichever was uppermost at Paris, had no better fate than others. [He was guillotined in Nov. 1793.]

against this universal, and very simple system—of main force.

The Vendéans, who tried the open and manly mode of generous and direct resistance, were, as we have seen, finally destroyed, leaving a name which will live for ages. The commercial towns, which, upon a scale more modified, also tried their strength with the revolutionary torrent, were successively overpowered. One can, therefore, be no more surprised that the rest of the nation gave way to predominant force, than we are daily at seeing a herd of strong and able-bodied cattle driven to the shambles before one or two butchers, and as many bull-dogs. As the victims approach the slaughter-house, and smell the blood of those which have suffered the fate to which they are destined, they may be often observed to hesitate, start, roar, and bellow, and intimate their dread of the fatal spot, and instinctive desire to escape from it; but the cudgels of their drivers, and the fangs of the mastiffs, seldom fail to compel them forward, slavering, and snorting, and trembling, to the destiny which awaits them.

The power of exercising this tremendous authority over a terrified nation, was vested in few hands, and rested on a very simple basis.

The Convention had, after the fall of the Girondists, remained an empty show of what it had once some title to call itself,—The Representative Body of the French Nation. The members belonging to The Plain, who had observed a timid neutrality betwixt The Mountain and the Girondists, if not without talent, were without courage to

make any opposition to the former when triumphant. They crouched to their fate, were glad to escape in silence, and to yield full passage to the revolutionary torrent. They consoled themselves with the usual apology of weak minds—that they submitted to what they could not prevent; and their adversaries, while despising them, were yet tolerant of their presence, and somewhat indulgent to their scruples, because, while these timid neutrals remained in their ranks, they furnished to the eye at least the appearance of a full senate, filled the ranks of the representative body as a garment is stuffed out to the required size by buckram, and countenanced by their passive acquiescence the measures which they most detested in their hearts. It was worth the while of The Mountain to endure the imbecility of such associates, and even to permit occasionally some diffident opposition on their part, had it only been to preserve appearances, and afford a show of a free assembly debating on the affairs of the nation. Thus, although the name of the National Convention was generally used, its deputies, carefully selected from the Jacobin or ruling party, were every where acting in their name, with all the authority of Roman proconsuls; while two-thirds of the body sate with submitted necks and padlocked lips, unresisting slaves to the minor proportion, which again, under its various fierce leaders, was beginning to wage a civil war within its own limited circle.

But the young reader, to whom this eventful history is a novelty, may ask in what hands was

the real power of the government lodged, of which the Convention, considered as a body, was thus effectually deprived, though permitted to retain, like the apparition in Macbeth,—

> ———" upon its baby brow the round
> And type of sovereignty?"

France had, indeed, in 1792, accepted, with the usual solemnities, a new constitution, which was stated to rest on the right republican basis, and was of course alleged to afford the most perfect and absolute security for liberty and equality, that the nation could desire. But this constitution was entirely superseded in practice by the more compendious mode of governing by means of a junto, selected out of the Convention itself, without observing any farther ceremony. In fact, two small Committees, vested with the full authority of the state, exercised the powers of a dictatorship; while the representatives of the people, like the senate under the Roman empire, retained the form and semblance of supreme sway, might keep their curule chairs, and enjoy the dignity of fasces and lictors, but had in their possession and exercise scarcely the independent powers of an English vestry, or quarter-sessions.

The Committee of Public Safety dictated every measure of the Convention, or more frequently acted without deigning to consult the legislative body at all. The number of members who exercised this executive government fluctuated betwixt ten and twelve; and, as they were all chosen Jacobins, and selected as men capable of going all the

lengths of their party, care was taken, by re-elections from time to time, to render the situation permanent. This body deliberated in secret, and had the despotic right of interfering with and controlling every other authority in the state; and before its absolute powers, and the uses which were made of them, the Council of Ten of the Venetian government sunk into a harmless and liberal institution. Another committee, with powers of the same revolutionary nature, and in which the members were also renewed from time to time, was that of Public Security. It was inferior in importance to that of Public Safety, but was nevertheless as active within its sphere. We regret to record of a man of genius, that David, the celebrated painter,[1] held a seat in the Committee of Public Security. The fine arts, which he studied, had not produced on his mind the softening and humanizing effect ascribed to them. Frightfully ugly in his exterior, his mind seemed to correspond with the harshness of his looks. "Let us grind enough of the Red," was the professional phrase of which he made use, when sitting down to the bloody work of the day.

That these revolutionary committees might have in their hands a power subject to no legal defence or evasion on the part of the accused, Merlin of Douay, a lawyer, it is said, of eminence, framed what was termed the law against suspected persons, which was worded with so much ingenuity, that not only it enveloped every one who, by birth,

[1] David is generally allowed to have possessed great merit as a draughtsman. Foreigners do not admire his composition and colouring, so much as his countrymen.

friendship, habits of life, dependencies, or other ties, was linked, however distantly, with aristocracy, whether of birth or property, but also all who had, in the various changes and phases of the Revolution, taken one step too few in the career of the most violent patriotism, or had, though it were but for one misguided and doubtful moment, held opinions short of the most extravagant Jacobinism. This crime of suspicion was of the nature of the cameleon; it derived its peculiar shade or colour from the person to whom it attached for the moment. To have been a priest, or even an assertor of the rights and doctrines of Christianity, was fatal; but in some instances, an overflow of atheistical blasphemy was equally so. To be silent on public affairs, betrayed a culpable indifference; but it incurred darker suspicion to speak of them otherwise than in the most violent tone of the ruling party. By a supplementary law, this spider's web was so widely extended, that it appeared no fly could be found insignificant enough to escape its meshes. Its general propositions were of a nature so vague, that it was impossible they could ever be made subjects of evidence. Therefore they were assumed without proof; and at length, definition of the characteristics of suspicion seems to have been altogether dispensed with, and all those were suspected persons whom the revolutionary committees and their assistants chose to hold as such.

The operation of this law was terrible. A suspected person, besides being thrown into prison, was deprived of all his rights, his effects sealed up, his property placed under care of the state, and he

himself considered as civilly dead. If the unfortunate object of suspicion had the good fortune to be set at liberty, it was no security whatever against his being again arrested on the day following. There was, indeed, no end to the various shades of sophistry which brought almost every kind of person under this oppressive law, so ample was its scope, and undefined its objects.

That the administrators of this law of suspicion might not have too much trouble in seeking for victims, all householders were obliged to publish on the outside of their doors a list of the names and description of their inmates. Domestic security, the most precious of all rights to a people who know what freedom really is, was violated on every occasion, even the slightest, by domiciliary visits. The number of arrests which took place through France, choked the prisons anew which had been so fearfully emptied on the 2d and 3d of September, and is said to have been only moderately computed at three hundred thousand souls, one-third of whom were women. The Jacobins, however, found a mode of jail-delivery less summary than by direct massacre; although differing so little from it in every other respect, that a victim might have had pretty nearly the same chance of a fair trial before Maillard and his men of September, as from the Revolutionary Tribunal. It requires an effort even to write that word, from the extremities of guilt and horror which it recalls. But it is the lot of humanity to record its own greatest disgraces; and it is a wholesome and humbling lesson to exhibit a just picture of those excesses, of which, in its unassisted

movements, and when agitated by evil and misguided passions, human nature can be rendered capable.

The extraordinary criminal court, better known by the name of the Revolutionary Tribunal, was first instituted upon the motion of Danton. Its object was to judge of state crimes, plots, and attempts against liberty, or in favour of royalty, or affecting the rights and liberty of man, or in any way, more or less, tending to counteract the progress of the Revolution. In short, it was the business of this court to execute the laws, or inflict the sentence rather, upon such as had been arrested as suspected persons; and they generally saw room to punish in most of the instances where the arresting functionaries had seen ground for imprisonment.

This frightful court consisted of six judges or public accusers, and two assistants. There were twelve jurymen; but the appointment of these was a mere mockery. They were official persons, who held permanent appointments; had a salary from the state; and were in no manner liable to the choice or challenge of the party tried. Jurors and judges were selected for their Republican zeal and steady qualities, and were capable of seeing no obstacle either of law or humanity in the path of their duty. This tribunal had the power of deciding without proof,—or cutting short evidence when in the progress of being adduced,—or stopping the defence of the prisoners at pleasure; privileges which tended greatly to shorten the forms of court, and aid the despatch of business.[1]

[1] [Thiers, t. iv. p. 6; Mignet, t. i. p. 249.]

The Revolutionary Tribunal was in a short time so overwhelmed with work, that it became necessary to divide it into four sections, all armed with similar powers. The quantity of blood which it caused to be shed was something unheard of, even during the proscriptions of the Roman Empire; and there were involved in its sentences crimes the most different, personages the most opposed, and opinions the most dissimilar. When Henry VIII. roused the fires of Smithfield both against Protestant and Papist, burning at the same stake one wretch for denying the King's supremacy, and another for disbelieving the divine presence in the Eucharist, the association was consistency itself, compared to the scenes presented at the Revolutionary tribunal, in which Royalist, Constitutionalist, Girondist, Churchman, Theophilanthropist, Noble and Roturier, Prince and Peasant, both sexes and all ages, were involved in one general massacre, and sent to execution by scores together, and on the same sledge.

Supporting by their numerous associations the government as exercised by the Revolutionary Committees, came the mass of Jacobins, who, divided into a thousand clubs, emanating from that which had its meetings at Paris, formed the strength of the party to which they gave the name.

The sole principle of the Jacobinical institutions was to excite against all persons who had any thing to lose, the passions of those who possessed no property, and were, by birth and circumstances, brutally ignorant, and envious of the advantages enjoyed by the higher classes. All other govern-

ments have made individual property the object of countenance and protection; but in this strangely inverted state of things, it seemed the object of constant suspicion and persecution, and exposed the owner to perpetual danger. We have elsewhere said that Equality (unless in the no less intelligible than sacred sense of equal submission to the law) is a mere chimera, which can no more exist with respect to property, than in regard to mental qualifications, or personal strength, beauty, or stature. Divide the whole property of a country equally among its inhabitants, and a week will bring back the inequality which you have endeavoured to remove; nay, a much shorter space will find the industrious and saving richer than the idle and prodigal. But in France, at the period under discussion, this equality, in itself so unattainable, had completely superseded even the principle of liberty, as a watch-word for exciting the people. It was to sin against this leading principle to be possessed of, and more especially to enjoy ostentatiously, any thing which was wanting to your neighbour. To be richer, more accomplished, better bred, or better taught, subjected you to the law of suspicion, and you were conducted instantly before a Revolutionary Committee, where you were probably convicted of incivism; not for interfering with the liberty and property of others, but for making what use you pleased of your own.

The whole of the terrible mystery is included in two regulations, communicated by the Jacobin Club of Paris to the Committee of Public Safety.—1. That when, by the machinations of opulent persons,

seditions should arise in any district, it should be declared in a state of rebellion.—2. That the Convention shall avail themselves of such opportunity *to excite the poor to make war on the rich*, and to restore order at any price whatever.—This was so much understood, that one of the persons tried by the Revolutionary Tribunal, when asked what he had to say in his defence, answered,—"I am wealthy—what avails it to me to offer any exculpation when such is my offence?"

The committees of government distributed large sums of money to the Jacobin Club and its affiliated societies, as being necessary to the propagation of sound political principles. The clubs themselves took upon them in every village the exercise of the powers of government; and while they sat swearing, drinking, and smoking, examined passports, imprisoned citizens, and enforced to their full extent the benefits of liberty and equality. "Death or Fraternity" was usually inscribed over their place of assembly; which some one translated,—"Become my brother, or I will kill thee."

These clubs were composed of members drawn from the lees of the people, that they might not, in their own persons, give an example contradicting the equality which it was their business to enforce. They were filled with men without resources or talents, but towards whom the confidence of the deceived people was directed, from the conviction that, because taken from among themselves, they would have the interest of the lower orders constantly in view. Their secretaries, however, were generally selected with some atten-

tion to alertness of capacity; for on them depended the terrible combination which extended from the mother society of Jacobins in Paris, down into the most remote villages of the most distant provinces, in which the same tyranny was maintained by the influence of similar means. Thus rumours could be either circulated or collected with a speed and uniformity, which enabled a whisper from Robespierre to regulate the sentiments of the Jacobins at the most distant part of his empire; for his it unquestionably was, for the space of two dreadful years.

France had been subjected to many evils ere circumstances had for a time reduced her to this state of passive obedience to a yoke, which, after all, when its strength was fairly tried, proved as brittle as it was intolerable. Those who witnessed the tragedies which then occurred, look back upon that period as the delirium of a national fever, filled with visions too horrible and painful for recollection, and which, being once wiped from the mind, we recall with difficulty and reluctance, and dwell upon with disgust. A long course of events, tending each successively to disorganize society more and more, had unhappily prevented a brave, generous, and accomplished people from combining together in mutual defence. The emigration and forfeiture of the nobles and clergy had deprived the country at once of those higher classes, that right-hand file, who are bred up to hold their lives light if called on to lay them down for religion, or in defence of the rights of their country, or the principles of their own honour or conscience.

Whatever may be thought of the wisdom or necessity of emigration, its evils were the same. A high-spirited and generous race of gentry, accustomed to consider themselves as peculiar depositaries of the national honour—a learned and numerous priesthood, the guardians of religious opinion—had been removed from their place, and society was so much the more weak and more ignorant for the want of them. Whether voluntarily abandoning or forcibly driven from the country, the expulsion of so large a mass, belonging entirely to the higher orders, tended instantly to destroy the balance of society, and to throw all power into the hands of the lower class; who, deceived by bad and artful men, abused it to the frightful excess we have described.

We do not mean to say, that the emigrants had carried with them beyond the frontiers all the worth and courage of the better classes in France, or that there were not, among men attached to the cause of liberty, many who would have shed their blood to have prevented its abuse. But these had been, unhappily, during the progress of the Revolution, divided and subdivided among themselves, were split up into a variety of broken and demolished parties, which had repeatedly suffered proscription; and, what was worse, sustained it from the hand of each other. The Constitutionalist could not safely join in league with the Royalist, or either with the Girondist; and thus there existed no confidence on which a union could be effected, among materials repulsive of each other. There extended, besides, through France, far and near, that sorrow

and sinking of the heart, which prevails amid great national calamities, where there is little hope. The state of oppression was so universal, that no one strove to remedy its evils, more than they would have struggled to remedy the *malaria* of an infected country. Those who escaped the disorder contented themselves with their individual safety, without thinking of the general evil, as one which human art could remedy, or human courage resist.

Moreover, the Jacobinical rulers had surrounded themselves with such a system of espionage and delation, that the attempt to organize any resistance to their power, would have been in fact, to fall inevitably and fatally under their tyranny. If the bold conspirator against this most infernal authority did not bestow his confidence on a false friend or a concealed emissary of the Jacobin party, he was scarce the safer on that account; for if he breathed forth in the most friendly ear any thing tending to reflect on the free, happy, and humane government under which he had the happiness to live, his hearer was bound, equally as a hired spy, to carry the purport of the conversation to the constituted authorities—that is, to the Revolutionary Committees or Republican Commissioners; and above all, to the Committee of Public Safety. Silence on public affairs, and acquiescence in democratic tyranny, became, therefore, matter of little wonder; for men will be long mute, when to indulge the tongue may endanger the head. And thus, in the kingdom which boasts herself most civilized in Europe, and with all that ardour for liberty which seemed but of late to animate every bosom, the general apathy

of terror and astonishment, joined to a want of all power of combination, palsied every effort at resistance. They who make national reflections on the French for remaining passive under circumstances so hopeless, should first reflect, that our disposition to prevent or punish crime, and our supposed readiness to resist oppression, have their foundation in a strong confidence in the laws, and in the immediate support which they are sure to receive from the numerous classes who have been trained up to respect them, as protectors of the rich equally and of the poor. But in France, the whole system of the administration of justice was in the hands of brutal force; and it is one thing to join in the hue and cry against a murderer, seconded by the willing assistance of a whole population—another to venture upon withstanding him in his den, he at the head of his banditti, the assailant defenceless, excepting in the justice of his cause

It has further been a natural subject of wonder, not only that the richer and better classes, the avowed objects of Jacobin persecution, were so passively resigned to this frightful tyranny, but also why the French populace, whose general manners are so civilized and so kindly, that they are, on ordinary occasions, the gayest and best-humoured people in Europe, should have so far changed their character as to delight in cruelty, or at least to look on, without expressing disgust, at cruelties perpetrated in their name.

But the state of a people in ordinary times and peaceful occupations, is in every country totally different from the character which they manifest

under strong circumstances of excitation. Rousseau says, that no one who sees the ordinary greyhound, the most sportive, gentle, and timid perhaps of the canine race, can form an idea of the same animal pursuing and strangling its screaming and helpless victim. Something of this sort must plead the apology of the French people in the early excesses of the Revolution; and we must remember, that men collected in crowds, and influenced with a sense of wrongs, whether real or imaginary, are acted upon by the enthusiasm of the moment; and are besides in a state of such general and undistinguishing fury, that they adopt, by joining in the clamours and general shouts, deeds of which they hardly witness the import, and which perhaps not one of the assembled multitude out of a thousand would countenance, were that import distinctly felt and known. In the revolutionary massacres and cruelties, there was always an executive power, consisting of a few well-breathed and thorough-paced ruffians, whose hands perpetrated the actions, to which the ignorant vulgar only lent their acclamations.

This species of assentation became less wonderful when instant slaughter, without even the ceremony of enquiry, had been exchanged for some forms, however flimsy and unsubstantial, of regular trial, condemnation, and execution. These served for a time to satisfy the public mind. The populace saw men dragged to the guillotine, convicted of criminal attempts, as they were informed, against the liberty of the people; and they shouted

as at the punishment of their own immediate enemies.

But as the work of death proceeded daily, the people became softened as their passions abated; and the frequency of such sacrifices having removed the odious interest which for a while attended them, the lower classes, whom Robespierre desired most to conciliate, looked on, first with indifference, but afterwards with shame and disgust, and at last with the wish to put an end to cruelties, which even the most ignorant and prejudiced began to regard in their own true, undisguised light.

Yet the operation of these universal feelings was long delayed. To support the Reign of Terror, the revolutionary committees had their own guards and executioners, without whom they could not have long withstood the general abhorrence of mankind. All official situations were scrupulously and religiously filled up by individuals chosen from the Sans-Culottes, who had rendered themselves, by their zeal, worthy of that honourable appellation. Were they of little note, they were employed in the various capacities of guards, officers, and jailers, for which the times created an unwearied demand. Did they hold places in the Convention, they were frequently despatched upon commissions to different parts of France, to give new edge to the guillotine, and superintend in person the punishment of conspiracy or rebellion, real or supposed. Such commissioners or proconsuls, as they were frequently termed, being vested with unlimited power, and fresh in its exercise, signalized

themselves by their cruelty, even more than the tyrants whose will they discharged.

We may quote in illustration, a remarkable passage in an address, by the Commissioners of Public Safety, to the representatives absent upon commissions, in which there occur some gentle remarks on their having extended capital punishment to cases where it was not provided by law, although the lustre of their services to the Republic far outshone the shade of such occasional peccadilloes. For their future direction, they are thus exhorted. "Let your energy awaken anew as the term of your labour approaches. The Convention charges you to complete the purification and reorganization of the constituted authorities with the least possible delay, and to report the conclusion of these two operations before the end of the next month. A simple measure may effect the desired purification. *Convoke the people in the popular societies—Let the public functionaries appear before them—Interrogate the people on the subject of their conduct, and let their judgment dictate yours.*"[1] Thus the wildest prejudices arising in the Jacobin Club, consisting of the lowest, most ignorant, most prejudiced, and often most malicious members in society, were received as evidence, and the populace declared masters, at their own pleasure, of the property, honour, and life of those who had held any brief authority over them.

Where there had occurred any positive rising or

[1] Moniteur, No. 995, 25th December, 1793.

resistance, the duty of the commissioners was extended by all the powers that martial law, in other words, the rule of superior force, could confer. We have mentioned the murders committed at Lyons; but even these, though hundreds were swept away by volleys of musket-shot, fell short of the horrors perpetrated by Carrier at Nantes,[1] who, in avenging the Republic on the obstinate resistance of La Vendée, might have summoned hell to match his cruelty, without a demon venturing to answer his challenge. Hundreds, men, women, and children, were forced on board of vessels which were scuttled and sunk in the Loire, and this was called Republican Baptism. Men and women were stripped, bound together, and thus thrown into the river, and this was called Republican Marriage.[2] But we have said enough

[1] [Carrier was born at Yolay, near Aurillac, in 1756, and, previous to the Revolution, was an attorney. During his mission to Nantes, not less than thirty-two thousand human beings were destroyed by *noyades* and *fusillades*, and by the horrors of crowded and infected prisons. Being accused by Merlin de Thionville, Carnot, and others, he declared to the Convention, 23d November, 1794, that by trying him it would ruin itself, and that if all the crimes committed in its name were to be punished, "not even the little bell of the president was free from guilt." He was convicted of having had children of thirteen and fourteen years old shot, and of having ordered drownings, and this with counter-revolutionary intentions. He ascended the scaffold with firmness, and said, "I die a victim and innocent: I only executed the orders of the committees."]

[2] [See Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 42; Toulongeon, t. v. p. 120; Thiers, vi. p. 373; Lacretelle, xii. p. 165; Vie et Crimes de Carrier, par Gracchus Babœuf; Dénonciation des Crimes de Carrier, par Philippes Tronjolly; Procès de Carrier; Bulletin du Tribunal Révolutionnaire de Nantes.]

to show that men's blood seems to have been converted into poison, and their hearts into stone, by the practices in which they were daily engaged. Many affected even a lust of cruelty, and the instrument of punishment was talked of with the fondness and gaiety with which we speak of a beloved and fondled object. It had its pet name of "the Little National Window," and others equally expressive; and although saints were not much in fashion, was, in some degree canonized by the name of "the Holy Mother Guillotine."[1] That active citizen, the executioner, had also his honours, as well as the senseless machine which he directed. This official was admitted to the society of some of the more emphatic patriots, and, as we shall afterwards see, shared in their civic festivities. It may be questioned whether even *his* company was not too good for the patrons who thus regaled him.

There was also an armed force raised among the most thorough-paced and hardened satellites of the lower order, termed by preeminence "the Revolutionary Army." They were under the command of Ronsin, a general every way worthy of such soldiers.[2] These troops were produced on

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 309. "In 1793, a bookseller, (a *pure* Royalist in 1814,) had this inscription painted over his shop door, 'A Notre Dame de la Guillotine.'"—MONTGAILLARD, t. iv. p. 189.]

[2] [Ronsin was born at Soissons in 1752. He figured in the early scenes of the Revolution, and in 1789, brought out, at one of the minor Paris theatres, a tragedy called "La Ligue des Fanatiques et des Tyrans," which, though despicable in point of style, had a considerable run. Being denounced by Robes-

outlawed persons, of whatever description, was enforced with the heaviest penalty. Yet, not only among the better classes, but among the poorest of the poor, were there men of noble minds found, who, having but half a morsel to support their own family, divided it willingly with some wretched fugitive, though death stood ready to reward their charity.

In some cases, fidelity and devotion aided the suggestions of humanity. Among domestic servants, a race whose virtues should be the more esteemed, that they are practised sometimes in defiance of strong temptation, were found many distinguished instances of unshaken fidelity. Indeed, it must be said, to the honour of the French manners, that the master and his servant live on a footing of much more kindliness than attends the same relation in other countries, and especially in Britain. Even in the most trying situations, there were not many instances of domestic treason, and many a master owed his life to the attachment and fidelity of a menial. The feelings of religion sheltered others. The recusant and exiled priests often found among their former flock the means of concealment and existence, when it was death to administer them. Often this must have flowed from grateful recollection of their former religious services—sometimes from unmingled veneration for the Being whose ministers they professed themselves.[1] Nothing short of such heroic exertions,

[1] Strangers are forcibly affected by the trifling incidents which sometimes recall the memory of those fearful times. A venerable French ecclesiastic being on a visit at a gentleman's house

which were numerous, (and especially in the class where individuals, hard pressed on account of their own wants, are often rendered callous to the distress of others,) could have prevented France, during this horrible period, from becoming a universal charnel-house, and her history an unvaried calendar of murder.

in North Britain, it was remarked by the family, that a favourite cat, rather wild and capricious in its habits, paid particular attention to their guest. It was explained, by the priest giving an account of his lurking in the waste garret, or lumber-room, of an artisan's house, for several weeks. In this condition, he had no better amusement than to study the manners and habits of the cats which frequented his place of retreat, and acquire the mode of conciliating their favour. The difficulty of supplying him with food, without attracting suspicion, was extreme, and it could only be placed near his place of concealment, in small quantities, and at uncertain times. Men, women, and children knew of his being in that place; there were rewards to be gained by discovery, life to be lost by persevering in concealing him; yet he was faithfully preserved, to try upon a Scottish cat, after the restoration of the Monarchy, the arts which he had learned in his miserable place of shelter during the Reign of Terror. The history of the time abounds with similar instances.

CHAPTER XVII.

Marat, Danton, Robespierre.—Marat poniarded.—Danton and Robespierre become Rivals.—Commune of Paris —their gross Irreligion.—Gobel.—Goddess of Reason. —Marriage reduced to a Civil Contract.—Views of Danton—and of Robespierre.—Principal Leaders of the Commune arrested—and Nineteen of them executed.— Danton arrested by the Influence of Robespierre—and, along with Camille Desmoulins, Westermann, and La Croix, taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal, condemned, and executed.—Decree issued, on the motion of Robespierre, acknowledging a Supreme Being.—Cécilée Regnault.—Gradual Change in the Public Mind.—Robespierre becomes unpopular.—Makes every effort to retrieve his power.—Stormy Debate in the Convention.— Collot D'Herbois, Tallien, &c., expelled from the Jacobin Club at the instigation of Robespierre.—Robespierre denounced in the Convention on the 9th Thermidor, (27th July, 1794,) and, after furious struggles, arrested, along with his brother, Couthon, and Saint Just.—Henriot, Commandant of the National Guard, arrested.— Terrorists take Refuge in the Hotel de Ville—Attempt their own lives.—Robespierre wounds himself—but lives, along with most of the others, long enough to be carried to the Guillotine, and executed.—His character—Struggles that followed his Fate.—Final Destruction of the Jacobinical System—and return of Tranquillity.—Singular colour given to Society in Paris.—Ball of the Victims.

THE reader need not be reminded, that the three distinguished champions who assumed the front in

the Jacobin ranks, were Marat, Danton, and Robespierre. The first was poniarded by Charlotte Corday,[1] an enthusiastic young person, who had nourished, in a feeling betwixt lunacy and heroism, the ambition of ridding the world of a tyrant.[2]

[1] [Charlotte Corday was born, in 1768, near Séez, in Normandy. She was twenty-five years of age, and resided at Caen, when she conceived and executed the design of ridding the world of this monster. She reached Paris on the 11th July, and on the 12th wrote a note to Marat, soliciting an interview, and purchased in the Palais-Royal a knife to plunge into the bosom of the tyrant. On the 13th, she obtained admission to Marat, whom she found in his bath-room. He enquired after the proscribed deputies at Caen. Being told their names—"They shall soon," he said, "meet with the punishment they deserve."—"Thine is at hand!" exclaimed she, and stabbed him to the heart. She was immediately brought to trial, and executed on the 17th.—LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 47; MONTGAILLARD, t. iv. p. 55.—Charlotte Corday was descended, in a direct line, from the great Corneille. See the genealogical table of the Corneille family, prefixed to Lepan's *Chefs-d'Œuvres de Corneille*, t. v. 8vo. 1816.]

[2] [Marat was born at Neuchatel in 1744. He was not five feet high. His countenance was equally ferocious and hideous, and his head monstrous in size. "He wore," says Madame Roland, "boots, but no stockings, a pair of old leather breeches, and a white silk waistcoat. His dirty shirt, open at the bosom, exhibited his skin of yellow hue; while his long and dirty nails displayed themselves at his fingers' ends, and his horrid face accorded perfectly with his whimsical dress."—*Mémoires*, part i. p. 176.

"After Marat's death, honours, almost divine, were decreed to him. In all the public places in Paris triumphal arches and mausoleums were erected to him: in the Place du Carousel a sort of pyramid was raised in celebration of him, within which were placed his bust, his bathing tub, his writing desk, and his lamp. The honours of the Pantheon were decreed him, and the poets celebrated him on the stage and in their works. But at last France indignantly broke the busts which his partisans had placed in all the theatres, his filthy remains were torn from the

Danton and Robespierre, reduced to a Duumvirate, might have divided the power betwixt them. But Danton, far the more able and powerful-minded man, could not resist temptations to plunder and to revel; and Robespierre, who took care to preserve proof of his rival's peculations, a crime of a peculiarly unpopular character, and from which he seemed to keep his own hands pure, possessed thereby the power of ruining him whenever he should find it convenient. Danton married a beautiful woman, became a candidate for domestic happiness, withdrew himself for some time from state affairs, and quitted the stern and menacing attitude which he had presented to the public during the earlier stages of the Revolution. Still his ascendency, especially in the Club of Cordeliers, was formidable enough to command Robespierre's constant attention, and keep awake his envy, which was like the worm that dieth not, though it did not draw down any indication of his immediate and active vengeance. A power, kindred also in crime, but more within his reach for the moment, was first to be demolished, ere Robespierre was to measure strength with his great rival.

This third party consisted of those who had pos-

Pantheon, trampled under foot, and dragged through the mud, by the same populace who had deified him."—*Biog. Mod.* t. ii. p. 355; MIGNET, t. ii. p. 279.

"In 1774, Marat resided at Edinburgh, where he taught the French language, and published, in English, a volume entitled 'The Chains of Slavery;' a work wherein the clandestine and villanous attempts of princes to ruin liberty are pointed out, and the dreadful scenes of despotism disclosed; to which is prefixed an address to the electors of Great Britain.'"—*Biog. Univ.*]

sessed themselves of official situations in the Commune of Paris, whose civic authority, and the implement which they commanded in the Revolutionary army, commanded by Ronsin, gave them the power of marching, at a moment's warning, upon the Convention, or even against the Jacobin Club. It is true, these men, of whom Hébert, Chaumette, and others, were leaders, had never shown the least diffidence of Robespierre, but, on the contrary, had used all means to propitiate his favour. But the man whom a tyrant fears, becomes, with little farther provocation, the object of his mortal enmity. Robespierre watched, therefore, with vigilance, the occasion of overreaching and destroying this party, whose power he dreaded; and, singular to tell, he sought the means of accomplishing their ruin in the very extravagance of their revolutionary zeal, which shortly before he might have envied, as pushed farther than his own. But Robespierre did not want sense; and he saw with pleasure Hébert, Chaumette, and their followers, run into such inordinate extravagances, as he thought might render his own interference desirable, even to those who most disliked his principles, most abhorred the paths by which he had climbed to power, and most feared the use which he made of it.

It was through the subject of religion that this means of ruining his opponents, as he hoped, arose. A subject, which one would have thought so indifferent to either, came to be on both sides the occasion of quarrel between the Commune of Paris and the Jacobin leader. But there is a fanaticism of atheism, as well as of superstitious belief; and a

philosopher can harbour and express as much malice against those who persevere in believing what he is pleased to denounce as unworthy of credence, as an ignorant and bigoted priest can bear against a man who cannot yield faith to dogmata which he thinks insufficiently proved. Accordingly, the throne being wholly annihilated, it appeared to the philosophers of the school of Hébert,[1] that, in totally destroying such vestiges of religion and public worship as were still retained by the people of France, there was room for a splendid triumph of liberal opinions. It was not enough, they said, for a regenerate nation to have dethroned earthly kings, unless she stretched out the arm of defiance towards those powers which superstition had represented as reigning over boundless space.[2] . . .

An unhappy man, named Gobel, constitutional bishop of Paris, was brought forward to play the principal part in the most impudent and scandalous farce ever acted in the face of a national representation.

It is said, that the leaders of the scene had some difficulty in inducing the bishop to comply with the task assigned him; which, after all, he executed, not without present tears and subsequent remorse.[3]

[1] [See Note, *ante*, p. 107.]

[2] ["Pache, Hébert, and Chaumette, the leaders of the municipality, publicly expressed their determination to dethrone the King of Heaven, as well as the kings of the earth!"—LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 300.]

[3] [Gobel was born at Thann, in Upper Alsace, in 1727. In January, 1791, he took the oath of fidelity to the new constitution, and in March following was installed Bishop of Paris, by the Bishop of Autun, M. de Talleyrand. In April, 1794, he

But he did play the part prescribed. He was brought forward in full procession, [Nov. 7,] to declare to the Convention, that the religion which he had taught so many years, was, in every respect, a piece of priestcraft, which had no foundation either in history or sacred truth. He disowned, in solemn and explicit terms, the existence of the Deity to whose worship he had been consecrated, and devoted himself in future to the homage of Liberty, Equality, Virtue, and Morality. He then laid on the table his Episcopal decorations, and received a fraternal embrace from the president of the Convention.[1] Several apostate priests followed the example of this prelate.[2]

The gold and silver plate of the churches was seized upon and desecrated; processions entered the Convention, travestied in priestly garments, and singing the most profane hymns; while many of the chalices and sacred vessels were applied by Chaumette and Hébert to the celebration of their

was dragged before the revolutionary tribunal, accused (with Chaumette, and the actor Grammont,) of conspiracy and atheism, and executed. See, in the *Annales Catholiques*, t. iii. p. 466., a letter from the Abbé Lothringer, one of his vicars, showing that Gobel died penitent.]

[1] ["On présente le bonnet rouge à Gobel; il le met sur la tête. Un grand nombre de membres—'L'accolade à l'évêque de Paris.'—*Le Président.* 'D'après l'abjuration qui vient d'être faite, l'évêque de Paris est un être de raison: mais je vais embrasser Gobel.'—Le president donne l'accolade à Gobel.'"—*Moniteur*, No. 49, 2d décade de Brumaire, 9th Nov.]

[2] [Toulongeon, t. iv. p. 124; Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 157. "Gaivernon, one of the constitutional bishops, exclaimed, 'I want no other god, and no other king, but the will of the people.'"—Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 302.]

own impious orgies. The world, for the first time, heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilisation, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity. For a short time, the same mad profanity continued to be acted upon.

One of the ceremonies of this insane time stands unrivalled for absurdity, combined with impiety. The doors of the Convention [Nov. 10] were thrown open to a band of musicians; preceded by whom, the members of the municipal body entered in solemn procession, singing a hymn in praise of liberty, and escorting, as the object of their future worship, a veiled female, whom they termed the Goddess of Reason. Being brought within the bar, she was unveiled with great form, and placed on the right hand of the president; when she was generally recognised as a dancing-girl of the Opera,[1] with whose charms most of the persons present were acquainted from her appearance on the stage, while the experience of individuals was farther extended. To this person, as the fittest representative of that Reason whom they worshipped, the National Convention of France rendered public homage.[2]

[1] [A Mademoiselle Maillard, at that time the mistress of Mormoro.]

[2] ["The goddess, after receiving the fraternal hug of the president, was mounted on a magnificent car, and conducted, amidst an immense crowd, to the church of Notre-Dame, to take the place of the Holy of Holies. Thenceforward that ancient and

This impious and ridiculous mummery had a certain fashion; and the installation of the Goddess of Reason was renewed and imitated throughout the nation, in such places where the inhabitants desired to show themselves equal to all the heights of the Revolution. The churches were, in most districts of France, closed against priests and worshippers—the bells were broken and cast into cannon—the whole ecclesiastical establishment destroyed—and the Republican inscription over the cemeteries, declaring Death to be perpetual Sleep,[1] announced to those who lived under that dominion, that they were to hope no redress even in the next world.

Intimately connected with these laws affecting religion, was that which reduced the union of marriage, the most sacred engagement which human beings can form, and the permanence of which leads most strongly to the consolidation of society, to the state of a mere civil contract of a transitory character, which any two persons might engage in, and cast loose at pleasure, when their taste was changed, or their appetite gratified.[2] If fiends had set themselves to work to discover a mode of most effectually destroying whatever is venerable, graceful, or permanent in domestic life, and of obtaining, at the same time, an assurance that the mischief which it was their object to create should be per-

imposing cathedral was called 'the Temple of Reason.'"—LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 306; THIERS, t. v. p. 342; TOULONGEON, t. iv. p. 124.]

[1] ["C'est ici l'asile du sommeil eternel."]

[2] [Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 333.]

petuated from one generation to another, they could not have invented a more effectual plan than the degradation of marriage into a state of mere occasional cohabitation, or licensed concubinage. Sophie Arnould,[1] an actress famous for the witty things she said, described the Republican marriage as "the Sacrament of Adultery."

These anti-religious and anti-social regulations did not answer the purpose of the frantic and inconsiderate zealots by whom they had been urged forward. Hébert and Chaumette had outrun the spirit of the time, evil as that was, and had contrived to get beyond the sympathy even of those, who, at heart as vicious and criminal as they, had still the sagacity to fear, or the taste to be disgusted with, this overstrained tone of outrageous impiety. Perhaps they might have other motives for condemning so gross a display of irreligion. The most guilty of men are not desirous, generally speaking, totally to disbelieve and abandon all doctrines of religious faith. They cannot, if they would, prevent themselves from apprehending a future state of retribution; and little effect as such feeble glimmering of belief may have on their lives, they will not, in general, willingly throw away the slight chance, that it may be possible on some occasion to reconcile themselves to the Church or to the Deity. This hope, even to those on whom it has no salutary influence, resembles the confi-

[1] [Sophie Arnould, born at Paris in 1740, was not less celebrated for her native wit than her talents on the stage. Shortly after her death, in 1803, appeared "Arnouldiana, ou Sophie Arnould et ses contemporaires."]

dence given to a sailor during a gale of wind, by his knowing that there is a port under his lee. His purpose may be never to run for the haven, or he may judge there is great improbability that by doing so he should reach it in safety; yet still, such being the case, he would esteem himself but little indebted to any one who should blot the harbour of refuge out of the chart. To all those, who, in various degrees, received and believed the great truths of religion, on which those of morality are dependent, the professors of those wild absurdities became objects of contempt, dislike, hatred, and punishment.

Danton regarded the proceedings of Hébert and his philosophers of the Commune with scorn and disgust. However wicked he had shown himself, he was too wise and too proud to approve of such impolitic and senseless folly. Besides, this perpetual undermining whatever remained of social institutions, prevented any stop being put to the revolutionary movements, which Danton, having placed his party at the head of affairs, and himself nearly as high as he could promise to climb, was now desirous should be done.

Robespierre looked on these extravagant proceedings with a different and more watchful eye. He saw what Hébert and his associates had lost in popularity, by affecting the doctrines of atheism and utter profaneness; and he imagined a plan, first for destroying these blasphemers, by the general consent of the nation, as noxious animals, and then of enlarging, and, as it were, sanctifying his own power, by once more connecting a spirit of

devotion of some modified kind or other with the revolutionary form of government, of which he desired to continue the head.

It has even been supposed, that Robespierre's extravagant success in rising so much above all human expectation, had induced him to entertain some thoughts of acting the part of a new Mahomet, in bringing back religious opinion into France, under his own direct auspices. He is said to have countenanced in secret the extravagances of a female called Catharine Theos, or Theost,[1] an enthusiastic devotee, whose doctrines leaned to Quietism. She was a kind of Joanna Southcote,[2] and the Aaron of her sect was Dom Gerle, formerly a Carthusian monk, and remarkable for the motion he made in the first National Assembly, that the Catholic religion should be recognised as that of France.[3] Since that time he had become entirely deranged. A few visionaries of both sexes attended secret and nightly meetings, in which Theos and Dom Gerle[4] presided. Robespierre was recognised by them as one of the elect, and is said to have

[1] [This miserable visionary passed herself off at one time as the mother of God, and at another as a second Eve, destined to regenerate mankind. In 1794, she was arrested and sent to the Conciergerie, where she died at the age of seventy. See *Les Mystères de la Mère de Dieu devoilés*, in the *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à la Rev. Franç.* t. xx. p. 271.]

[2] [This aged lunatic, who fancied herself to be with child of a new Messiah, died in 1815.]

[3] See *ante*, vol. viii. p. 207.

[4] [Gerle was imprisoned in the Conciergerie, but liberated through the interference of Robespierre. He was employed, during the reign of Napoleon, in the office of the home department.]

favoured their superstitious doctrines. But, whether the dictator saw in them any thing more than tools, which might be applied to his own purpose, there seems no positive authority to decide. At any rate, whatever religious opinions he might have imbibed himself, or have become desirous of infusing into the state, they were not such as were qualified to modify either his ambition, his jealousy, or his love of blood.

The power of Hébert, Chaumette, and of the Commune of Paris, was now ripe for destruction. Ronsin, with the other armed satellites of the revolutionary army, bullied indeed, and spoke about taking the part of the magistracy of Paris against the Convention; but though they had the master and active ruffians still at their service, they could no longer command the long sable columns of pikes, which used to follow and back them, and without whose aid they feared they might not be found equal in number to face the National Guard. So early as 27th December, 1793, we find Chaumette[1]

[1] [Chaumette was born at Nevers in 1763. For some time he was employed as a transcriber by the journalist Prudhomme, who describes him as a very ignorant man. In 1792, he was appointed attorney of the Commune of Paris, upon which occasion he changed his patronymic of Pierre-Gaspard for that of Anaxagoras—"a saint," he said, "who had been hanged for his republicanism." He it was who prepared the charges and arranged the evidence against Marie Antoinette. On being committed to the prison of the Luxembourg, "he appeared," says the author of the Tableau des Prisons de Paris, "oppressed with shame, like a fox taken in a net: he hung his head, his eye was mournful and cast down, his countenance sad, his voice soft and supplicating. He was no longer the terrible attorney of the Commune." He was guillotined, 13th April,

expressing himself to the Commune, as one who had fallen on evil times and evil days. He brought forward evidence to show that it was not he who had conducted the installation of the Goddess of Reason in his native city of Nevers; and he complains heavily of his lot, that the halls were crowded with women demanding the liberty of their husbands, and complaining of the conduct of the Revolutionary Societies. It was plain, that a change was taking place in the political atmosphere, when Chaumette was obliged to vindicate himself from the impiety which used to be his boast, and was subjected, besides, to female reproach for his republican zeal, in imprisoning and destroying a few thousand suspected persons.

The spirit of reaction increased, and was strengthened by Robespierre's influence now thrown into the scale against the Commune. The principal leaders in the Commune, many of whom seem to have been foreigners, and among the rest the celebrated Anacharsis Clootz, were [22d March] arrested.

The case of these men was singular, and would have been worthy of pity had it applied to any but such worthless wretches. They were accused of almost every species of crime, which seemed such in the eyes of a Sans-Culotte. Much there was which could be only understood metaphysically; much there was of literal falsehood; but little or nothing like a distinct or well-grounded accusation of a specific criminal fact. The charge bore, that

1794, with the apostate bishop, Gobel, and the actor Grammont.]

they were associates of Pitt and Cobourg, and had combined against the sovereignty of the people—loaded them with the intention of starving thereby Paris—with that of ridiculing the Convention, by a set of puppets dressed up to imitate that scarce less passive assembly—and much more to the same purpose, consisting of allegations that were totally unimportant, or totally unproved. But nothing was said of their rivalry to Robespierre, which was the true cause of their trial, and as little of their revolutionary murders, being the ground on which they really deserved their fate. Something was talked of pillage, at which Ronsin, the commandant of the revolutionary army, lost all patience. "Do they talk to me of pilfering?" he says.—"Dare they accuse such a man as I am of a theft of bed and body linen? Do they bring against me a charge of petty larceny—against *me*, who have had all their throats at my disposal?"[1]

The accused persons were convicted and executed, [23d March,] to the number of nineteen.[2] From that time the city of Paris lost the means of being so preeminent in the affairs of France, as her Commune had formerly rendered her. The

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 363.]

[2] ["Such was the public avidity to witness the execution of Hébert and his companions, that considerable sums were realized by the sale of seats. Hébert wept from weakness, and made no attempt to conceal his terrors. He sunk down at every step; while the populace, who had so recently endeavoured to deliver him from the fangs of the Convention, loaded him with execrations, mimicking the cry of the newsmen who hawked his journal about the streets."—THIERS, t. vi. p. 142.]

power of the magistracy was much broken by the reduction of the revolutionary army, which the Convention dissolved as levied upon false principles, and as being rather a metropolitan than a national force, and one which was easily applied to serve the purposes of a party.

The Hébertists being removed, Robespierre had yet to combat and defeat a more formidable adversary. The late conspirators had held associations with the Club of Cordeliers, with which Danton was supposed to have particular relations, but they had not experienced his support, which in policy he ought to have extended to them. He had begun to separate his party and his views too distinctly from his old friends and old proceedings. He imagined, falsely as it proved, that his bark could sail as triumphantly upon waves composed only of water, as on those of blood. He and others seem to have been seized with a loathing against these continued acts of cruelty, as if they had been gorged and nauseated by the constant repetition. Danton spoke of mercy and pardon; and his partisan, Camille Desmoulins, in a very ingenious parody upon Tacitus,[1] drew a comparison between the tyrants and informers of the French Jacobin government, and those of the Roman Imperial Court. The parallels were most ably drawn, and Robespierre and his agents might read their own characters in those of the most odious wretches of

[1] [Of the pamphlet, entitled "Le Vieux Cordelier," one hundred thousand copies, Lacretelle says, were sold in a few days. It was reprinted, in 1825, in the *Collection des Mémoires sur la Revolution.*]

that odious time. From these aggressions Danton seemed to meditate the part which Tallien afterwards adopted, of destroying Robespierre and his power, and substituting a mode of government which should show some regard at least to life and to property. But he was too late in making his movement; Robespierre was beforehand with him; and, on the morning of the 31st of March, the Parisians and the members of the Convention hardly dared whisper to each other, that Danton, whose name had been as formidable as the sound of the tocsin, had been arrested like any poor exnoble, and was in the hands of the fatal lictors.

There was no end of exclamation and wonder; for Danton was the great apostle, the very Mahomet of Jacobinism. His gigantic stature, his huge and ferocious physiognomy, his voice which struck terror in its notes of distant thunder, and the energies of talent and vehemence mingled, which supplied that voice with language worthy of its deep tones, were such as became the prophet of that horrible and fearful sect. Marat was a madman, raised into consequence only by circumstances,—Robespierre a cold, creeping, calculating, hypocrite, whose malignity resembled that of a paltry and second-rate fiend,—but Danton was a character for Shakspeare or Schiller to have drawn in all its broad lights and shades; or Bruce could have sketched from him a yet grander Ras Michael than he of Tigré. His passions were a hurricane, which, furious, regardless, and desolating in its course, had yet its intervals of sunshine and repose. Neither good by nature, nor just by principle or

political calculation, men were often surprised at finding he still possessed some feelings of generosity, and some tendency even towards magnanimity. Early habits of profligate indulgence, the most complete stifler of human virtue, and his implication at the beginning of his career with the wretched faction of Orleans, made him, if not a worse, certainly a meaner villain than nature had designed him; for his pride must have saved him from much, which he yielded to from the temptations of gross indulgence, and from the sense of narrow circumstances. Still, when Danton fell under Robespierre, it seemed as if the "mousing-owl" had hawked at and struck an eagle, or at least a high-soaring vulture. His avowed associates lamented him, of course; nay, Legendre and others, by undertaking his defence in the Convention, and arrogating for him the merit of those violent measures which had paved the way to the triumph of Jacobinism, showed more consistency in their friendship, than these ferocious demagogues manifested on any other occasion.[1]

Danton, before his fall, seemed to have lost much of his sagacity as well as energy. He had full warning of his danger from La Croix, Westermann, and others, yet took no steps either for escape or defence, though either seemed in his power.[2] Still, his courage was in no degree abated, or his haughty spirit tamed; although he seemed to submit passively to his fate with the

[1] [Mignet, t. ii. p. 308; Thiers, t. vi. p. 189.]

[2] ["Sneak into exile!" said he, "can a man carry his country at the sole of his shoe?"—Thiers, t. vi. p. 148.]

disheartening conviction, which often unmans great criminals, that his hour was come.[1]

Danton's process was, of course, a short one. He and his comrades, Camille Desmoulins, Westermann, and La Croix,[2] were dragged before the Revolutionary Tribunal—a singular accomplishment of the prophecy of the Girondist, Boyer-Fonfrède.[3] This man had exclaimed to Danton, under whose auspices that engine of arbitrary power was established, "You insist, then, upon erecting this arbitrary judgment-seat? Be it so;

[1] [Riouffe, a fellow captive, states, that when Danton entered his prison, he exclaimed, "At last I perceive, that in revolutions the supreme power rests with the most abandoned."—*Mémoires*, p. 67.

"Seeing Thomas Payne, he said to him, 'What you have accomplished for the happiness and freedom of your country, I have in vain endeavoured to effect for mine. I have been less successful, but am not more culpable.' At another time he exclaimed, 'It is just about a year since I was the means of instituting the revolutionary tribunal. I ask pardon of God and man for what I did: my object was to prevent a new September, and not to let loose a scourge of humanity.' . . 'My treacherous brethren (mes frères Caïn) understand nothing of government: I leave every thing in frightful confusion.' . . 'It were better to be a poor fisherman than a ruler of men.'"—THIERS, t. vi. p. 155; MIGNET, t. ii. p. 312.]

[2] [La Croix was born, in 1754, at Pont-Audemer. His destruction being resolved on by Robespierre, he was arrested with Danton, 31st March, and executed 5th April, 1794. When the act of accusation was brought, Danton asked him what he said to it. "That I am going to cut off my hair," said he, "that Samson [the executioner] may not touch it."]

[3] [Boyer Fonfrède was born at Bordeaux. Being appointed deputy from the Gironde to the Convention, he vigorously opposed Marat and the Mountain. He escaped the first proscription of the Girondists, but perished on the scaffold in 1793.]

and, like the tormenting engine devised by Phalaris, may it not fall to consume its inventors?" As judges, witnesses, accusers, and guards, Danton was now surrounded by those who had been too humble to aspire to be companions of his atrocities, and held themselves sufficiently honoured in becoming his agents. They looked on his unstooping pride and unshaken courage, as timid spectators upon a lion in a cage, while they still doubt the security of the bars, and have little confidence in their own personal safety. He answered to the formal interrogatories concerning his name and dwelling, "My dwelling will be soon with annihilation — my name will live in the Pantheon of History."[1] Camille Desmoulins,[2] Hérault

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xi., p. 380.]

[2] [Camille Desmoulins was born at Guise in 1762, and educated with Robespierre, at the College of Louis-le-Grand. He it was who, in 1789, began the practice of collecting groups of people to harangue them in the streets, and who advised the revolutionists to distinguish themselves by a badge. Hence the tricolor cockade. After the taking of the Bastile, he published, under the name of "Attorney-General of the Lantern," a periodical paper, called "Révolutions de France et de Brabant." "It must not, however," says M. Dumont, "be imagined, that he excited the people to use the lantern-posts instead of the gallows, an abomination attributed to him by Bertrand de Moleville—quite the reverse: he pointed out the danger and injustice of such summary executions, but in a tone of lightness and badinage, by no means in keeping with so serious a subject. Camille appeared to me what is called a good fellow; of rather exaggerated feelings, devoid of reflection or judgment, as ignorant as he was unthinking, not deficient in wit, but in politics possessing not even the first elements of reason." P. 135. On his trial, being interrogated as to his age, he answered, "I am thirty-three, the same age as the Sans-Culotte Jesus Christ when he died." On the day of execution he made the most violent efforts to avoid getting into the fatal cart. His shirt was

Séchelles,[1] Fabre d'Eglantine,[2] men of considerable literary talent, and amongst the few Jacobins who

in tatters, and his shoulders bare; his eyes glared, his mouth foamed at the moment when he was bound, and on seeing the scaffold he exclaimed, "This, then, is the reward reserved for the first apostle of liberty!" His wife, a beautiful creature, by whom he was tenderly beloved, was arrested a few days after his death, and sent to the scaffold.—THIERS, t. vi. p. 169; *Biog. Mod.* t. i. p. 364; LACRETELLE, t. xi. p. 380.]

[1] [Hérault Séchelles was born at Paris in 1760. He began his career at the bar, by holding the office of King's advocate at the Châtelet; and afterwards, by the patronage of the Queen, was appointed advocate-general. Shortly before his arrest he was offered a retreat in Switzerland, and a passport, in a fictitious name, from the agent of Bâle, but his answer was, "I would gladly accept the offer, if I could carry my native country with me." He published "Visite à Buffon," "Théorie de l'Ambition," and "Rapports sur la Constitution," &c. 1793.]

[2] [Fabre d'Eglantine, born at Carcassonne in 1755, was in early life an actor, and performed at Versailles, Brussels, and Lyons, but with moderate success. As an author he discovered considerable talent; the latter part of his name being assumed, in memory of a prize which he had won in his youth. His most successful production was a comedy, entitled, "Le Philinte de Molière, ou La Suite du Misanthrope," in which he has traced the *beau idéal* of an honest man. His "Œuvres Mêlées et Posthumes," were published, in two volumes, in 1802. One of the things that seemed most to trouble him after his arrest was, that he had left among his papers an unpublished comedy called "L'Orange de Malte," which he considered better than his "Philinte," and which he feared Billaud-Varennes would get hold of, and publish as his own. Mercier, his colleague, says of him, "I do not know whether Fabre's hands were stained by the lavishing of money not his own, but I know that he was a promoter of assassinations; poor before the 2d of September, 1792, he had afterwards an hotel, and carriages, and servants, and women." "As to Fabre," says Madame Roland, "muffled in a cowl, armed with a poniard, and employed in forging plots to defame the innocent, or to ruin the rich, whose wealth he covets, he is so perfectly in character, that whoever would paint the most abandoned hypocrite, need only draw his portrait in that dress."]

had any real pretension to such accomplishments, shared his fate. Westermann was also numbered with them, the same officer who directed the attack on the palace of the Tuileries on the 10th August, and who afterwards was distinguished by so many victories and defeats in La Vendée, that he was called, from his activity, the scourge of that district.[1]

Their accusation was, as in all such cases at the period, an olla podrida, if we can be allowed the expression, in which every criminal ingredient was mixed up; but so incoherently mingled and assembled together, so inconsistent with each other, and so obscurely detailed in the charge and in the proof, that it was plain that malignant falsehood had made the gruel thick and slab. Had Danton been condemned for his real crimes, the doom ought, in justice, to have involved judges, jurors, witnesses, and most of the spectators in the court.

Robespierre became much alarmed for the issue of the trial. The Convention showed reviving signs of spirit; and when a revolutionary deputation demanded, at the bar, "that death should be

[1] [Westermann was born in 1764, at Molsheim, in Alsace. In December, 1792, he was denounced to the Convention, upon proof, as having, in 1786, stolen some silver plate from a coffee-house. "In La Vendée," says Prudhomme, "he ran from massacre to massacre, sparing neither adversaries taken in arms, nor the peaceful inhabitants." M. Beauchamp says that "he delighted in carnage, and would throw off his coat, tuck up his sleeves, and then, with his sabre, rush into the crowd, and hew about him to the right and left. But from the moment that he apprehended death, his dreams were of the horrors which he had perpetrated."]

the order of the day," and reminded them, that, "had they granted the moderate demand of three hundred thousand heads, when requested by the philanthropic, and now canonized Marat, they would have saved the Republic the wars of La Vendée," they were received with discouraging murmurs. Tallien, the president, informed them, "that not death, but justice, was the order of the day;" and the petitioners, notwithstanding the patriotic turn of their modest request, were driven from the bar with execrations.

This looked ill; but the power of Robespierre was still predominant with the Revolutionary Tribunal, and after a gallant, and unusually long defence, (of which no notice was permitted to appear in the Moniteur,) Danton[1] and his associates were condemned, and carried to instant execution. They maintained their firmness, or rather hardenedness of character, to the last.[2] The sufferers on this occasion, were men whose accomplishments and talents attracted a higher degree of sympathy,

[1] ["On the way to execution, Danton cast a calm and contemptuous look around him. Arrived at the steps of the scaffold, he advanced to embrace Hérault Séchelles, who held out his arms to receive him; the executioner interposing, 'What!' said he, with a smile of scorn, 'are you, then, more cruel than death? Begone! you cannot prevent our heads from soon uniting in that basket.' For a moment he was softened, and said, 'Oh! my beloved! oh, my wife, I shall never see thee more!' but instantly checking himself, exclaimed, 'Danton, no weakness!' and ascended the scaffold."—THIERS, t. vi. p. 169; *Biog. Mod.* t. i. p. 332.]

[2] [It has been said, that when Danton observed Fabre d'Eglantine beginning to look gloomy, he cheered him with a play on words: "Courage, my friend, we are all about to take up your trade—*Nous allons faire des* vers."]

than that which had been given to the equally eloquent but less successful Girondists. Even honest men looked on the fate of Danton with some regret, as when a furious bull is slain with a slight blow by a crafty Taurider; and many men of good feelings had hoped, that the cause of order and security might at least have been benefited in some degree, by his obtaining the victory in a struggle with Robespierre. Those, on the other hand, who followed the fortunes of the latter, conceived his power had been rendered permanent, by the overthrow of his last and most formidable rival, and exulted in proportion. Both were deceived in their calculations. The predominance of such a man as Danton, might possibly have protracted the reign of Jacobinism, even by rendering it somewhat more endurable; but the permanent, at least the ultimate, success of Robespierre, was becoming more impossible, from the repeated decimations to which his jealousy subjected his party. He was like the wild chief, Lope d'Aguirre, whose story is so well told by Southey, who, descending the great river Orellana with a party of bucaniers, cut off one part of his followers after another, in doubt of their fidelity, until the remainder saw no chance for escaping a similar fate, unless by being beforehand with their leader in murder.

Alluding to Robespierre's having been the instrument of his destruction, Danton had himself exclaimed, "The cowardly poltroon! I am the only person who could have commanded influence enough to save him."[1] And the event showed

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 382.]

that he spoke with the spirit of prophecy which the approach of fate has been sometimes thought to confer.

In fact, Robespierre was much isolated by the destruction of the party of Hébert, and still more by that of Danton and his followers. He had, so to speak, scarped away the ground which he occupied, until he had scarce left himself standing-room; and, detested by honest men, he had alienated, by his successive cruelties, even the knaves who would otherwise have adhered to him for their own safety. All now looked on him with fear, and none dared hope at the hands of the Dictator a better boon than that which is promised to OUTIS, that he should be the last devoured.

It was at this period that Robespierre conceived the idea of reversing the profanities of Chaumette, Hébert, and the atheists, by professing a public belief in the existence of a Deity. This, he conceived, would at once be a sacrifice to public opinion, and, as he hoped to manage it, a new and potent spring, to be moved by his own finger. In a word, he seems to have designed to unite, with his power in the state, the character of High Pontiff of the new faith.

As the organ of the Committee of Public Safety, Robespierre, [May 7,] by a speech of great length, and extremely dull, undertook the conversion of the French nation from infidelity. Upon all such occasions he had recourse to that gross flattery, which was his great, rarely-failing, and almost sole receipt for popularity. He began by assuring them, that, in her lights, and the progress of her improve-

ment, France had preceded the rest of Europe by a mark of at least two thousand years; and that, existing among the ordinary nations of the world, she appeared to belong to another race of beings. Still, he thought, some belief in a Deity would do her no harm. Then he was again hurried away by his eloquence, of which we cannot help giving a literal specimen, to show at how little expense of sense, taste or talent, a man may be held an excellent orator, and become dictator of a great nation:—

"Yes, the delicious land which we inhabit, and which Nature caresses with so much predilection, is made to be the domain of liberty and of happiness; and that people, at once so open to feeling and to generous pride, are born for glory and for virtue. O my native country! if fortune had caused my birth in some region remote from thy shores, I would not the less have addressed constant prayers to Heaven in thy behalf, and would have wept over the recital of thy combats and thy virtues. My soul would have followed with restless ardour every change in this eventful Revolution—I would have envied the lot of thy natives—of thy representatives. But I am myself a native of France—I am myself a representative. Intoxicating rapture!—O sublime people, receive the sacrifice of my entire being! Happy is he who is born in the midst of thee! More happy he who can lay down his life for thy welfare!"[1]

[1] When we read such miserable stuff, and consider the crimes which such oratory occasioned, it reminds us of the opinion of a Mahomedan doctor, who assured Bruce that the Degial,

Such was the language which this great demagogue held to the "sublime people" whose lives he disposed of at the rate of fifty per day, regular task-work;[1] and who were so well protected in person and property, that no man dared call his hat his own, or answer for ten minutes' space for the security of the head that wore it. Much there was, also, about the rashness of the worshippers of Reason, whose steps he accuses of being too premature in her cause—much about England and Mr Pitt, who, he says, fasted on account of the destruction of the Catholic religion in France, as they wore mourning for Capet and his wife. But the summary of this extraordinary oration was a string of decrees, commencing with a declaration that the Republic of France acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being, in the precise form in which the grand nation might have recognised the government of a coordinate state. The other decrees established the nature of the worship to be rendered to the Great Being whom these frail atoms had restored to his place in their thoughts; and this was to be expressed by dedicating a day in each decade to some peculiar and established Virtue, with hymns and processions in due honour of it, approaching as near to Paganism as could well be accomplished. The last decree appointed a *fête* to be given in honour of the Supreme Being himself, as the nation might have celebrated by

or Antichrist, was to appear in the form of an ass, and that multitudes were to follow him to hell, attracted by the music of his braying.

[1] [Thiers, t. vi. p. 291.]

public rejoicings a pacification with some neighbouring power.[1]

The speech was received with servile applause by the Convention. Couthon, with affected enthusiasm, demanded that not only the speech should be published in the usual form, by supplying each member with six copies, but that the plan should be translated into all languages, and dispersed through the universe.

The conducting of this heathen mummery, which was substituted for every external sign of rational devotion, was intrusted to the genius of the painter David; and had it not been that the daring blasphemy of the purpose threw a chill upon the sense of ridicule, it was scarcely matched as a masquerade, even by the memorable procession conducted by the notorious Orator of the Human Race.[2] There was a general muster of all Paris, [June 8,] divided into bands of young women and matrons, and old men and youths, with oaken boughs and drawn swords, and all other emblems appertaining to their different ages. They were preceded by the representatives of the people, having their hands full of ears of corn, and spices, and fruits; while Robespierre, their president,

[1] [Thiers, t. vi. p. 197.]

[2] Poor Anacharsis Clootz! He had been expelled from the Jacobin Club as a Prussian, an ex-noble, and, what perhaps was not previously suspected, a person of fortune enough to be judged an aristocrat. His real offence was being a Hébertist, and he suffered accordingly with the leaders of that party.—This note was rather unnecessary; but Anacharsis Clootz was, in point of absurdity, one of the most inimitable personages in the Revolution. [See *ante*, v. viii. p. 262.]

clad in a sort of purple garment, moved apart and alone, and played the part of Sovereign Pontiff.[1]

After marching up and down through the streets, to the sound of doggrel hymns, the procession drew up in the gardens of the Tuileries, before some fireworks which had been prepared, and Robespierre made a speech, entirely addressed to the bystanders, without a word either of prayer or invocation. His acknowledgment of a Divinity was, it seems, limited to a mere admission in point of fact, and involved no worship of the Great Being, whose existence he at length condescended to own. He had no sooner made his offering, than fire was set to some figures dressed up to resemble Atheism, Ambition, Egotism, and other evil principles. The young men then brandished their weapons, the old patted them on the head, the girls flung about their flowers, and the matrons flourished aloft their children, all as it had been set down in David's programme. And this scene of masking was to pass for the repentance of a great people turning themselves again to the Deity, whose wor-

[1] ["The most indecent irreligion served as a lever for the subversion of the social order. There was a kind of consistency in founding crime upon impiety; it is an homage paid to the intimate union of religious opinions with morality. Robespierre conceived the idea of celebrating a festival in honour of the Supreme Being, flattering himself, doubtless, with being able to rest his political ascendency on a religion arranged according to his own notions; as those have frequently done who have wished to seize the supreme power. But, in the procession of this impious festival, he bethought himself of walking the first, in order to mark his preeminence; and from that time he was lost."—MAD. DE STAËL, v. ii. p. 142.]

ship they had forsaken, and whose being they had denied![1]

I will appeal—not to a sincere Christian—but to any philosopher forming such idea of the nature of the Deity, as even mere unassisted reason can attain to, whether there does not appear more impiety in Robespierre's mode of acknowledging the Divinity, than in Hébert's horrible avowal of direct Atheism?

The procession did not, in common phrase, *take* with the people: it produced no striking effect—awakened no deep feeling. By Catholics it was regarded with horror, by wise men of every or no principle as ridiculous; and there were politicians, who, under the disguise of this religious ceremony, pretended to detect further and deeper schemes of the dictator Robespierre. Even in the course of the procession, threats and murmurs had reached his ears, which the impatient resentment of the friends of Danton was unable to suppress;[2] and he saw plainly that he must again betake himself to the task of murder, and dispose of Tallien, Collot d'Herbois, and others, as he had done successively of Hébert and Danton himself, or else his former victories would but lead to his final ruin.

[1] [Thiers, t. vi. p. 268; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 15. Mignet, t. ii. p. 322; Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 207.]

[2] ["Lecointre de Versailles, stepping up to him, said, 'I like your festival, Robespierre, but you I detest mortally.' Bourdon de l'Oise reminded him of Mirabeau's famous saying, 'the Capitol is near the Tarpeian rock;' many among the crowd muttered the word 'Tyrant!' adding, 'there are still Brutuses;' and when, in the course of his speech, he said, 'It is the Great Eternal who has placed in the bosom of the oppressor the sensa-

Meanwhile the despot, whose looks made even the democrats of The Mountain tremble, when directed upon them, shrunk himself before the apprehended presence of a young female. Cécile Regnault, a girl, and, as it would seem, unarmed, came to his house and demanded to see Robespierre. Her manner exciting some suspicion, she was seized upon by the body-guard of Jacobins, who day and night watched the den of the tyrant, amidst riot and blasphemy, while he endeavoured to sleep under the security of their neighbourhood. When the young woman was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, she would return no answer to the questions respecting her purpose, excepting that she wished to see "what a tyrant was like." She was condemned to the guillotine of course; and about sixty persons were executed as associates of a conspiracy, which was never proved, by deed or word, to have existed at all. The victims were drawn at hazard out of the prisons, where most of them had been confined for months previous to the arrest of Cécile Regnault, on whose account they were represented as suffering.[1] Many have thought the crime entirely imaginary, and only invented by Robespierre

tion of remorse and terror;' a powerful voice exclaimed, 'True! Robespierre, very true!' "—LACRETELLE, t. xii. p. 18.]

[1] This unheard-of iniquity is stated in the report of the committee appointed to examine Robespierre's papers, of which Courtois was the reporter. It is rather a curious circumstance that, about the time of Cécile Regnault's adventure, there appeared, at a masked ball at London, a character dressed like the spectre of Charlotte Corday, come, as she said, to seek Robespierre, and inflict on him the doom of Marat.

to represent his person as endangered by the plots of the aristocracy, and attach to himself a part at least of the consequence, which Marat had acquired by the act of Charlotte Corday.[1]

A few weeks brought on a sterner encounter, than that of the supposed female assassin. The Terrorists were divided among themselves. The chosen and ancient bands of the 10th August, 2d September, 31st May, and other remarkable periods of the Revolution, continued attached to the Jacobins, and the majority of the Jacobin Club adhered to Robespierre; it was there his strength consisted. On the other hand, Tallien, Barras, Legendre, Fouché, and other of the Mountain party, remembered Danton, and feared for a similar fate. The Convention at large were sure to embrace any course which promised to free them from their present thraldom.

The people themselves were beginning to be less passive. They no longer saw the train of victims pass daily to the guillotine in the Place de la Révolution, with stupid wonder, or overwhelming fear, but, on the contrary, with the sullenness of manifest resentment, that waited but an opportunity to display itself. The citizens in the Rue St Honoré shut up their shops at the hours when the fatal tumbrils passed to the scene of death, and that whole quarter of the city was covered with gloom.

These ominous feelings were observed, and the fatal engine was removed to a more obscure situa-

[1] [Mignet, t. ii. p. 322; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 10; *Biog. Mod.* t. iii. p. 149.]

tion at the Barrièr de la Trône, near the Faux-bourg Saint Antoine, to the inhabitants of which it was thought a daily spectacle of this nature must be an interesting relief from labour. But even the people of that turbulent suburb had lost some of their Republican zeal—the men's feelings were altered. They saw, indeed, blood stream in such quantities, that it was necessary to make an artificial conduit to carry it off; but they did not feel that they, or those belonging to them, received any advantages from the number of victims daily immolated, as they were assured, in their behalf. The constant effusion of blood, without plunder or license to give it zest, disgusted them, as it would have disgusted all but literal cannibals, to whose sustenance, indeed, the Revolutionary Tribunal would have contributed plentifully.[1]

Robespierre saw all this increasing unpopularity with much anxiety. He plainly perceived that, strong as its impulse was, the stimulus of terror began to lose its effect on the popular mind; and he resolved to give it novelty, not by changing the character of his system, but by varying the mode of its application. Hitherto, men had only been executed for political crimes, although the circle had been so vaguely drawn, and capable of such extension when desired, that the law regarding suspected persons was alone capable of desolating a whole country. But if the penalty of death were to be inflicted for religious and moral delinquencies, as well as for crimes directed against the state, it

[1] [Thiers, t. vi. p. 291; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 53.]

would at once throw the lives of thousands at his disposal, upon whom he could have no ready hold on political motives, and might support, at the same time, his newly assumed character as a reformer of manners. He would also thus escape the disagreeable and embarrassing necessity, of drawing lines of distinction betwixt his own conduct and that of the old friends whom he found it convenient to sacrifice. He could not say he was less a murderer than the rest of his associates, but he might safely plead more external decency of morals. His own manners had always been reserved and austere; and what a triumph would it have been, had the laws permitted him the benefit of slaying Danton, not under that political character which could hardly be distinguished from his own, but on account of the gross peculation and debauchery, which none could impute to the austere and incorruptible Robespierre.

His subordinate agents began already to point to a reformation of manners. Payan, who succeeded Hébert in the important station of Procureur to the Commune of the metropolis, had already adopted a very different line from his predecessor, whose style derived energy by printing at full length the foulest oaths, and most beastly expressions, used by the refuse of the people. Payan, on the contrary, in direct opposition to Père Duchêsne, is found gravely advising with the Commune of Paris, on a plan of preventing the exposing licentious prints and works to sale, to the evident danger of corrupting the rising generation.

There exists also a curious address from the

Convention, which tends to evince a similar purpose in the framer, Robespierre. The guilt of profane swearing, and of introducing the sacred name into ordinary speech, as an unmeaning and blasphemous expletive, is severely censured. The using indecent and vicious expressions in common discourse is also touched upon; but as this unbounded energy of speech had been so very lately one of the most accredited marks of a true Sans-Culotte, the legislators were compelled to qualify their censure by admitting, that, at the commencement of the Revolution, the vulgar mode of speaking had been generally adopted by patriots, in order to destroy the jargon employed by the privileged classes, and to *popularize*, as it was expressed, the general language of society. But these ends being effected, the speech of Republicans ought, it is said, to be simple, manly, and concise, but, at the same time, free from coarseness and violence.[1]

From these indications, and the tenor of a decree to be hereafter quoted, it seems plain, that Robespierre was about to affect a new character, not, perhaps, without the hope of finding a Puritanic party in France, as favourable to his ambitious views as that of the Independents was to Cromwell. He might then have added the word *virtue* to liberty and equality, which formed the national programme, and, doubtless, would have made it the pretext of committing additional crimes. The decree which we allude to was brought forward [June 8] by the philanthropic Couthon, who, with his kind-

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 22.]

ness of manner, rendered more impressive by a silver-toned voice, and an affectation of extreme gentleness, tendered a law, extending the powers of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the penalty of death, not only to all sorts of persons who should in any manner of way neglect their duty to the Republic, or assist her enemies, but to the following additional classes: All who should have deceived the people, or their representatives—all who should have sought to inspire discouragement into good citizens, or to favour the undertakings of tyrants—all who should spread false news—all who should seek to lead astray the public opinion, and to prevent the instruction of the people, or to debauch manners, and corrupt the public conscience; or who should diminish the purity of revolutionary principles by counter-revolutionary works, &c. &c. &c.[1]

It is evident, that compared with a law couched in terms so vague and general, so obscure and indefinite, the description of crimes concerning suspected persons was broad sunshine, that there was no Frenchman living who might not be brought within the danger of the decree, under one or other of those sweeping clauses; that a loose or careless expression, or the repetition of an inaccurate article of news, might be founded on as corrupting the public conscience, or misleading the public opinion; in short, that the slightest indulgence in the most ordinary functions of speech might be brought under this comprehensive edict, and so cost the speaker his life.

[1] [See it, in Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 23.]

The decree sounded like a death-knell in the ears of the Convention. All were made sensible that another decimation of the legislative body approached; and beheld with terror, that no provision was made in the proposed law for respecting the personal inviolability of the deputies, but that the obnoxious members of the Convention, without costing Robespierre even the formality of asking a decree from their complaisant brethren, might be transferred, like any ordinary individuals, to the butchery of the Revolutionary Tribunal, not only by the medium of either of the committees, but at the instance of the public prosecutor, or even of any of their own brethren of the representative body, who were acting under a commission. Ruamps, one of the deputies, exclaimed, in accents of despair, that "if this decree were resolved upon, the friends of liberty had no other course left than to blow their own brains out."

The law passed for the night, in spite of all opposition; but the terrified deputies returned to the attack next day. The measure was again brought into debate, and the question of privileges was evasively provided for. At a third sitting the theme was renewed; and, after much violence, the fatal decree was carried, without any of the clogs which had offended Robespierre, and he attained possession of the fatal weapon, such as he had originally forged it.[1]

From this moment there was mortal though secret war betwixt Robespierre and the most

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 30; Thiers, t. vi. p. 273.]

distinguished members of the Assembly, particularly those who had sate with him on the celebrated Mountain, and shared all the atrocities of Jacobinism. Collot d'Herbois, the demolisher of Lyons, and regenerator of Ville Affranchie, threw his weight into the scale against his master; and several other members of both committees, which were Robespierre's own organs, began secretly to think on means of screening themselves from a power, which, like the huge Anaconda, enveloped in its coils, and then crushed and swallowed, whatever came in contact with it. The private progress of the schism cannot be traced; but it is said that the dictator found himself in a minority in the Committee of Public Safety, when he demanded the head of Fouché, whom he had accused as a Dantonist in the Convention and the Jacobin Club. It is certain he had not attended the meeting of the Committee for two or three weeks before his fall, leaving his interest there to be managed by Couthon and Saint Just.

Feeling himself thus placed in the lists against his ancient friends the Terrorists, the astucious tyrant endeavoured to acquire allies among the remains of the Girondists, who had been spared in contempt more than clemency, and permitted to hide themselves among the neutral party who occupied The Plain, and who gave generally their votes on the prudential system of adhering to the stronger side.

Finding little countenance from this timid and long-neglected part of the legislative body, Robespierre returned to his more steady supporters in

the Jacobin Club. Here he retained his supremacy, and was heard with enthusiastic applause; while he intimated to them the defection of certain members of the legislature from the true revolutionary course; complained of the inactivity and lukewarmness of the Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, and described himself as a persecuted patriot, almost the solitary supporter of the cause of his country, and exposed for that reason to the blows of a thousand assassins. "All patriots," exclaimed Couthon, "are brothers and friends! For my part I invoke on myself the poniards destined against Robespierre." "So do we all!" exclaimed the meeting unanimously. Thus encouraged, Robespierre urged a purification of the Society, directing his accusations against Fouché and other members of The Mountain; and he received the encouragement he desired.[1]

He next ascertained his strength among the Judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and his willing agents among the reformed Commune of Paris, which, after the fall of Hébert and Chaumette, he had taken care to occupy with his most devoted friends. But still he knew that, in the storm which was about to arise, these out-of-door demagogues were but a sort of tritons of the minnows, compared to Tallien, Fouché, Barras, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud-Varennes, and other deputies of distinguished powers, accustomed to make their voices heard and obeyed amid all the roar of revolutionary tempest. He measured and

[1] [Thiers, t. vi. p. 307.]

remeasured his force with theirs; and for more than six weeks avoided the combat, yet without making any overtures for reconciliation, in which, indeed, neither party would probably have trusted the other.

Mean time the dictator's enemies had also their own ground on which they could engage advantageously in these skirmishes, which were to serve as preludes to the main and fatal conflict. Vadier, on the part of the Committee of Public Safety, laid before the Convention, in a tone of bitter satirical ridicule, the history of the mystical meetings and formation of a religious sect under Catherine Theot, whose pretensions have been already hinted at. No mention was indeed made of Robespierre, or of the countenance he was supposed to have given to these fanatical intriguers. But the fact of his having done so was well known; and the shafts of Vadier were aimed with such malignant dexterity, that while they seemed only directed against the mystics of whom he spoke, they galled to the quick the high pontiff, who had so lately conducted the new and singular system of worship which his influence had been employed to ingraft upon the genuine atheism natural to Jacobinism.[1]

Robespierre felt he could not remain long in this situation—that there were no means of securing himself where he stood—that he must climb higher, or fall—and that every moment in which he supported insults and endured menaces without making his vengeance felt, brought with it a diminution of

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 61.]

his power. He seems to have hesitated between combat and flight. Among his papers, according to the report of Cortois who examined them, was found an obscure intimation, that he had acquired a competent property, and entertained thoughts of retiring at the close of his horrible career, after the example of the celebrated Sylla. It was a letter from some unknown confident, unsigned and undated, containing the following singular passage:—"You must employ all your dexterity to escape from the scene on which you are now once more to appear, in order to leave it for ever. Your having attained the president's chair will be but one step to the guillotine, through a rabble who will spit upon you as you pass, as they did upon Egalité. Since you have collected a treasure sufficient to maintain you for a long time, as well as those for whom you have made provision, I will expect you with anxiety, that we may enjoy a hearty laugh together at the expense of a nation as credulous as it is greedy of novelty." If, however, he had really formed such a plan, which would not have been inconsistent with his base spirit, the means of accomplishing it were probably never perfected.[1]

At length his fate urged him on to the encounter. Robespierre descended [July 26] to the Convention, where he had of late but rarely appeared,

[1] [Robespierre was a fanatic, a monster, but he was incorruptible, and incapable of robbing, or of causing the deaths of others, from a desire of enriching himself. He was an enthusiast, but one who believed that he was acting right, and died not worth a sous."—NAPOLEON, *Voice from St Helena*, v. ii. p. 170.]

like the far nobler Dictator of Rome; and in his case also, a band of senators were ready to poniard the tyrant on the spot, had they not been afraid of the popularity he was supposed to enjoy, and which they feared might render them instant victims to the revenge of the Jacobins. The speech which Robespierre addressed to the Convention was as menacing as the first distant rustle of the hurricane, and dark and lurid as the eclipse which announces its approach. Anxious murmurs had been heard among the populace who filled the tribunes, or crowded the entrances of the hall of the Convention, indicating that a second 31st of May (being the day on which the Jacobins proscribed the Girondists) was about to witness a similar operation.

The first theme of the gloomy orator was the display of his own virtues and his services as a patriot, distinguishing as enemies to their country all whose opinions were contrary to his own. He then reviewed successively the various departments of the government, and loaded them in turn with censure and contempt. He declaimed against the supineness of the Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, as if the guillotine had never been in exercise; and he accused the committee of finance of having *counter-revolutionized* the revenues of the Republic. He enlarged with no less bitterness on withdrawing the artillery-men (always violent Jacobins) from Paris, and on the mode of management adopted in the conquered countries of Belgium. It seemed as if he wished to collect within the same lists all the functionaries of the

state, and in the same breath to utter defiance to them all.[1]

The usual honorary motion was made to print the discourse; but then the storm of opposition broke forth, and many speakers vociferously demanded, that before so far adopting the grave inculpations which it contained, the discourse should be referred to the two committees. Robespierre, in his turn, exclaimed, that this was subjecting his speech to the partial criticism and revision of the very parties whom he had accused. Exculpations and defences were heard on all sides against the charges which had been thus sweepingly brought forward; and there were many deputies who complained, in no obscure terms, of individual tyranny, and of a conspiracy on foot to outlaw and murder such part of the Convention as might be disposed to offer resistance. Robespierre was but feebly supported, save by Saint Just, Couthon, and by his own brother. After a stormy debate, in which the Convention were alternately swayed by their fear and their hatred of Robespierre, the discourse was finally referred to the committees, instead of being printed; and the haughty and sullen dictator saw, in the open slight thus put on his measures and opinions, the sure mark of his approaching fall.

He carried his complaints to the Jacobin Club, to repose, as he expressed it, his patriotic sorrows in their virtuous bosoms, where alone he hoped to

[1] [Thiers, t. vi. p. 398; Lacretelle, t. xii p. 71.]

find succour and sympathy. To this partial audience he renewed, in a tone of yet greater audacity, the complaints with which he had loaded every branch of the government, and the representative body itself. He reminded those around him of various heroic eras, when their presence and their pikes had decided the votes of the trembling deputies. He reminded them of their pristine actions of revolutionary vigour—asked them if they had forgot the road to the Convention,[1] and concluded by pathetically assuring them, that if they forsook him, "he stood resigned to his fate; and they should behold with what courage he would drink the fatal hemlock." The artist David caught him by the hand as he closed, exclaiming, in rapture at his elocution, "I will drink it with thee."[2]

The distinguished painter has been reproached, as having, on the subsequent day, declined the pledge which he seemed so eagerly to embrace. But there were many of his original opinion, at the time he expressed it so boldly; and had Robespierre possessed either military talents, or even decided courage, there was nothing to have prevented him from placing himself that very night at the head of a desperate insurrection of the Jacobins and their followers.

[1] ["I know," said Henriot, "the road to the Convention."—"Go," said Robespierre, "separate the wicked from the weak; deliver the Assembly from the wretches who enthral it. March! you may yet save liberty!"—THIERS, t. vi. p. 337.]

[2] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 85.]

Payan, the successor of Hébert, actually proposed that the Jacobins should instantly march against the two committees, which Robespierre charged with being the focus of the anti-revolutionary machinations, surprise their handful of guards, and stifle the evil with which the state was menaced, even in the very cradle. This plan was deemed too hazardous to be adopted, although it was one of those sudden and master-strokes of policy which Machiavel would have recommended. The fire of the Jacobins spent itself in tumult and threatening, in expelling from the bosom of their society Collot d'Herbois, Tallien, and about thirty other deputies of the Mountain party, whom they considered as specially leagued to effect the downfall of Robespierre, and whom they drove from their society with execrations and even blows.[1]

Collot d'Herbois, thus outraged, went straight from the meeting of the Jacobins to the place where the Committee of Public Safety was still sitting, in consultation on the report which they had to make to the Convention the next day upon the speech of Robespierre. Saint Just, one of their number, though warmly attached to the dictator, had been intrusted by the committee with the delicate task of drawing up that report. It was a step towards reconciliation; but the entrance of Collot d'Herbois, frantic with the insults he had received, broke off all hope of accommodation betwixt the friends of Danton and those of

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 86.]

Robespierre. D'Herbois exhausted himself in threats against Saint Just, Couthon, and their master, Robespierre, and they parted on terms of mortal and avowed enmity. Every exertion now was used by the associated conspirators against the power of Robespierre, to collect and combine against him the whole forces of the Convention, to alarm the deputies of The Plain with fears for themselves, and to awaken the rage of the Mountaineers, against whose throat the dictator now waved the sword, which their shortsighted policy had placed in his hands. Lists of proscribed deputies were handed around, said to have been copied from the tablets of the dictator: genuine or false, they obtained universal credit and currency; and those whose names stood on the fatal scrolls, engaged themselves for protection in the league against their enemy. The opinion that his fall could not be delayed now became general.

This sentiment was so commonly entertained in Paris on the 9th Thermidor, or 27th July, that a herd of about eighty victims, who were in the act of being dragged to the guillotine, were nearly saved by means of it. The people, in a generous burst of compassion, began to gather in crowds, and interrupted the melancholy procession, as if the power which presided over these hideous exhibitions had already been deprived of energy. But the hour was not come. The vile Henriot, commandant of the national guards, came up with fresh forces, and on the day destined to be the last of his own life, proved the means of carrying to

execution this crowd of unhappy and doubtless innocent persons.

On this eventful day Robespierre arrived in the Convention, and beheld The Mountain in close array and completely manned, while, as in the case of Catiline, the bench on which he himself was accustomed to sit, seemed purposely deserted. Saint Just, Couthon, Le Bas (his brother-in-law), and the younger Robespierre, were the only deputies of name who stood prepared to support him. But could he make an effectual struggle, he might depend upon the aid of the servile Barrère, a sort of Belial in the Convention, the meanest, yet not the least able, amongst those fallen spirits, who, with great adroitness and ingenuity, as well as wit and eloquence, caught opportunities as they arose, and was eminently dexterous in being always strong upon the strongest, and safe upon the safest side. There was a tolerably numerous party ready, in times so dangerous, to attach themselves to Barrère, as a leader who professed to guide them to safety, if not to honour; and it was the existence of this vacillating and uncertain body, whose ultimate motions could never be calculated upon, which rendered it impossible to presage with assurance the event of any debate in the Convention during this dangerous period.

Saint Just arose, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, to make, after his own manner, not theirs, a report on the discourse of Robespierre on the previous evening. He had begun an harangue in the tone of his patron, declaring that, were the tribune which he occupied the Tarpeian rock itself, he would not the less, placed as he stood,

there, discharge the duties of a patriot.—"I am about,"he said, "to lift the veil."—"I tear it asunder," said Tallien, interrupting him: "the public interest is sacrificed by individuals, who come hither to speak exclusively in their own name, and conduct themselves as superior to the whole Convention." He forced Saint Just from the tribune, and a violent debate ensued.

Billaud-Varennes called the attention of the Assembly to the sitting of the Jacobin Club on the preceding evening. He declared the military force of Paris was placed under the command of Henriot, a traitor and a parricide, who was ready to march the soldiers whom he commanded against the Convention. He denounced Robespierre himself as a second Catiline, artful as well as ambitious, whose system it had been to nurse jealousies and inflame dissensions in the Convention, so as to disunite parties, and even individuals, from each other, attack them in detail, and thus destroy those antagonists separately, upon whose combined and united strength he dared not have looked.

The Convention echoed with applause every violent expression of the orator, and when Robespierre sprung to the tribune, his voice was drowned by a general shout of "Down with the tyrant!" Tallien moved the denunciation of Robespierre, with the arrest of Henriot, his staff-officers, and of others connected with the meditated violence on the Convention. He had undertaken to lead the attack upon the tyrant, he said, and to poniard him in the Convention itself, if the members did not show courage enough to enforce the law against him. With

these words he brandished an unsheathed poniard, as if about to make his purpose good. Robespierre still struggled hard to obtain audience, but the tribune was adjudged to Barrère; and the part taken against the fallen dictator by that versatile and self-interested statesman, was the most absolute sign that his overthrow was irrecoverable. Torrents of invective were now uttered from every quarter of the hall, against him whose single word was wont to hush it into silence.

The scene was dreadful; yet not without its use to those who may be disposed to look at it as an extraordinary crisis, in which human passions were brought so singularly into collision. While the vaults of the hall echoed with exclamations from those who had hitherto been the accomplices, the flatterers, the followers, at least the timid and overawed assentators to the dethroned demagogue —he himself, breathless, foaming, exhausted, like the hunter of classical antiquity when on the point of being overpowered and torn to pieces by his own hounds, tried in vain to raise those screech-owl notes, by which the Convention had formerly been terrified and put to silence. He appealed for a hearing from the president of the assembly, to the various parties of which it was composed. Rejected by the Mountaineers, his former associates, who now headed the clamour against him, he applied to the Girondists, few and feeble as they were, and to the more numerous but equally helpless deputies of The Plain, with whom they sheltered. The former shook him from them with disgust, the

last with horror. It was in vain he reminded individuals that he had spared their lives, while at his mercy. This might have been applied to every member in the house; to every man in France; for who was it during two years that had lived on other terms than under Robespierre's permission? and deeply must he internally have regretted the clemency, as he might term it, which had left so many with ungashed throats to bay at him. But his agitated and repeated appeals were repulsed by some with indignation, by others with sullen, or embarrassed and timid silence.

A British historian must say, that even Robespierre ought to have been heard in his defence; and that such calmness would have done honour to the Convention, and dignified their final sentence of condemnation. As it was, they no doubt treated the guilty individual according to his deserts; but they fell short of that regularity and manly staidness of conduct which was due to themselves and to the law, and which would have given to the punishment of the demagogue the effect and weight of a solemn and deliberate sentence, in place of its seeming the result of a hasty and precipitate seizure of a temporary advantage.

Haste was, however, necessary, and must have appeared more so at such a crisis than perhaps it really was. Much must be pardoned to the terrors of the moment, the horrid character of the culprit, and the necessity of hurrying to a decisive conclusion. We have been told that his last audible words, contending against the exclamations of hun-

dreds, and the bell which the president[1] was ringing incessantly, and uttered in the highest tones which despair could give to a voice naturally shrill and discordant, dwelt long on the memory, and haunted the dreams, of many who heard him:—"President of assassins," he screamed, "for the last time I demand privilege of speech!"—After this exertion his breath became short and faint; and while he still uttered broken murmurs and hoarse ejaculations, a member of the Mountain[2] called out, that the blood of Danton choked his voice.

The tumult was closed by a decree of arrest against Robespierre, his brother, Couthon, and Saint Just; Le Bas was included on his own motion, and indeed could scarce have escaped the fate of his brother-in-law, though his conduct then, and subsequently, showed more energy than that of the others. Couthon, hugging in his bosom the spaniel upon which he was wont to exhaust the overflowing of his affected sensibility, appealed to his decrepitude, and asked whether, maimed of proportion and activity as he was, *he* could be suspected of nourishing plans of violence or ambition.—"Wretch," said Legendre, "thou hast the strength of Hercules for the perpetration of crime." Dumas, President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, with Henriot, commandant of the national guards, and other satellites of Robespierre, were included in the doom of arrest.[3]

[1] [Thuriot, whom Robespierre had repeatedly threatened with death.]

[2] [Garnier de l'Aube.]

[3] [Thiers, t. vi. p. 344; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 94; Mignet. t. ii. p. 339; Toulongeon, t. iv. p. 382; Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 249.]

The officers of the legislative body were ordered to lay hands on Robespierre; but such was the terror of his name, that they hesitated for some time to obey; and the reluctance of their own immediate satellites afforded the Convention an indifferent omen of the respect which was likely to be paid without doors to their decree against this powerful demagogue. Subsequent events seemed for a while to confirm the apprehensions thus excited.

The Convention had declared their sitting permanent, and had taken all precautions for appealing for protection to the large mass of citizens, who, wearied out by the Reign of Terror, were desirous to close it at all hazards. They quickly had deputations from several of the neighbouring sections, declaring their adherence to the national representatives, in whose defence they were arming, and (many undoubtedly prepared before-hand) were marching in all haste to the protection of the Convention. But they heard also the less pleasing tidings, that Henriot, having effected the dispersion of those citizens who had obstructed, as elsewhere mentioned, the execution of the eighty condemned persons, and consummated that final act of murder, was approaching the Tuileries, where they had held their sitting, with a numerous staff, and such of the Jacobinical forces as could hastily be collected.

Happily for the Convention, this commandant of the national guards, on whose presence of mind and courage the fate of France perhaps for the moment depended, was as stupid and cowardly as

he was brutally ferocious. He suffered himself, without resistance, to be arrested by a few gendarmes, the immediate guards of the Convention, headed by two of its members, who behaved in the emergency with equal prudence and spirit.

But fortune, or the demon whom he had served, afforded Robespierre another chance for safety, perhaps even for empire; for moments which a man of self-possession might have employed for escape, one of desperate courage might have used for victory, which, considering the divided and extremely unsettled state of the capital, was likely to be gained by the boldest competitor.

The arrested deputies had been carried from one prison to another, all the jailers refusing to receive under their official charge Robespierre, and those who had aided him in supplying their dark habitations with such a tide of successive inhabitants. At length the prisoners were secured in the office of the Committee of Public Safety. But by this time all was in alarm amongst the Commune of Paris, where Fleuriot the mayor, and Payan the successor of Hébert, convoked the civic body, despatched municipal officers to raise the city and the Fauxbourgs in their name, and caused the tocsin to be rung. Payan speedily assembled a force sufficient to liberate Henriot, Robespierre, and the other arrested deputies, and to carry them to the Hôtel de Ville, where about two thousand men were congregated, consisting chiefly of artillerymen, and of insurgents from the suburb of Saint Antoine, who already expressed their resolution of marching against the Convention. But

the selfish and cowardly character of Robespierre was unfit for such a crisis. He appeared altogether confounded and overwhelmed with what had passed and was passing around him; and not one of all the victims of the Reign of Terror felt its disabling influence so completely as he, the despot who had so long directed its sway. He had not, even though the means must have been in his power, the presence of mind to disperse money in considerable sums, which of itself would not have failed to ensure the support of the revolutionary rabble.

Mean time the Convention continued to maintain the bold and commanding front which they had so suddenly and critically assumed. Upon learning the escape of the arrested deputies, and hearing of the insurrection at the Hôtel de Ville, they instantly passed a decree outlawing Robespierre and his associates, inflicting a similar doom upon the Mayor of Paris, the Procureur and other members of the Commune, and charging twelve of their members, the boldest who could be selected, to proceed with the armed force to the execution of the sentence. The drums of the national guards now beat to arms in all the sections under authority of the Convention, while the tocsin continued to summon assistance with its iron voice to Robespierre and the civic magistrates. Every thing appeared to threaten a violent catastrophe, until it was seen clearly that the public voice, and especially amongst the national guards, was declaring itself generally against the Terrorists.

The Hôtel de Ville was surrounded by about

fifteen hundred men, and cannon turned upon the doors. The force of the assailants was weakest in point of number, but their leaders were men of spirit, and night concealed their inferiority of force.

The deputies commissioned for the purpose read the decree of the Assembly to those whom they found assembled in front of the city-hall, and they shrunk from the attempt of defending it, some joining the assailants, others laying down their arms and dispersing. Mean time the deserted group of Terrorists within, conducted themselves like scorpions, which, when surrounded by a circle of fire, are said to turn their stings on each other, and on themselves. Mutual and ferocious upbraiding took place among these miserable men. "Wretch, were these the means you promised to furnish?" said Coffinhal to Henriot, whom he found intoxicated and incapable of resolution or exertion; and seizing on him as he spoke, he precipitated the revolutionary general from a window. Henriot survived the fall only to drag himself into a drain, in which he was afterwards discovered and brought out to execution. The younger Robespierre[1] threw himself from the window, but had not the good fortune to perish on the spot. It seemed as if even the melancholy fate of suicide,

[1] ["Young Robespierre had but recently returned from the army of Italy, whither he had been sent by the Convention on a mission. He earnestly pressed Buonaparte to accompany him to Paris. 'Had I followed young Robespierre,' said Napoleon, 'how different might have been my career. On what trivial circumstances does human fate depend!'"—LAS CASAS, v. i. p. 348.]

the last refuge of guilt and despair, was denied to men who had so long refused every species of mercy to their fellow-creatures. Le Bas alone had calmness enough to despatch himself with a pistol-shot. Saint Just, after imploring his comrades to kill him, attempted his own life with an irresolute hand, and failed. Couthon lay beneath the table brandishing a knife, with which he repeatedly wounded his bosom, without daring to add force enough to reach his heart. Their chief, Robespierre, in an unsuccessful attempt to shoot himself,[1] had only inflicted a horrible fracture on his under-jaw.[2]

In this situation they were found like wolves in their lair, foul with blood, mutilated, despairing, and yet not able to die. Robespierre lay on a table in an anteroom, his head supported by a deal-box, and his hideous countenance half-hidden by a bloody and dirty cloth bound round the shattered chin.[3]

The captives were carried in triumph to the Convention, who, refusing to admit them to the bar, sent them before the Revolutionary Tribu-

[1] [Baron Méda, then a simple gendarme, states, in his "Précis Historique," that it was the discharge of his pistol that broke Robespierre's jaw.—See *Collection des Mémoires Rév.* t. xlii. p. 384.]

[2] [Toulongeon, t. iv. p. 390; Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 257; Thiers, t. vi. p. 360; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 117.]

[3] It did not escape the minute observers of this scene, that he still held in his hand the bag which had contained the fatal pistol, and which was inscribed with the words *Au grand Monarque*, alluding to the sign, doubtless, of the gunsmith who sold the weapon, but singularly applicable to the high pretensions of the purchaser. [See Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 257.]

nal, which ordered them, as outlaws, for instant execution. As the fatal cars passed to the guillotine, those who filled them, but especially Robespierre,[1] were overwhelmed with execrations from the friends and relatives of victims whom he had sent on the same melancholy road. The nature of his previous wound, from which the cloth had never been removed till the executioner tore it off, added to the torture of the sufferer. The shattered jaw dropped, and the wretch yelled aloud, to the horror of the spectators.[2] A mask taken from that dreadful head was long exhibited in different nations of Europe, and appalled the spectator by its ugliness, and the mixture of fiendish expression with that of bodily agony. At the same time fell young Robespierre, Couthon,[3] Saint Just, Coffinhal,[4] Henriot, Dumas, President

[1] [The horsemen who escorted him showed him to the spectators with the point of their sabres. The mob stopped him before the house in which he lived; some women danced before the cart, and one of them cried out to him, "Murderer of all my kindred, thy agony fills me with joy; descend to hell, with the curses of all wives, mothers, and children!"—LACRETELLE, t. xii. p. 119; *Biog. Mod.* v. i. p. 179.]

[2] The fate of no tyrant in story was so hideous at the conclusion, excepting perhaps that of Jugurtha.

[3] ["Couthon was born at Orsay, in 1756. Before the Revolution he had been distinguished for the gentleness, as well as the integrity of his character. Owing to the malformation of his lower limbs, it was difficult to fasten him to the moving plank of the guillotine; and the executioner was at last obliged to lay him on his side to receive the blow."—*Biog. Mod.* v. i p. 309.]

[4] ["Coffinhal was born at Aurillac, in 1746. He it was who, when Lavoisier requested that his death might be delayed a fortnight, in order that he might finish some important experiments, made answer that the Republic had no need of scholars and chemists."—*Biog. Univ.*]

of the Revolutionary Tribunal,[1] the Mayor, and fourteen of their subalterns.

Thus fell Maximilian Robespierre, after having been the first person in the French Republic for nearly two years, during which time he governed it upon the principles of Nero or Caligula. His elevation to the situation which he held involved more contradictions than perhaps attach to any similar event in history. A low-born and low-minded tyrant was permitted to rule with the rod of the most frightful despotism a people, whose anxiety for liberty had shortly before rendered them unable to endure the rule of a humane and lawful sovereign. A dastardly coward arose to the command of one of the bravest nations in the world; and it was under the auspices of a man who dared scarce fire a pistol, that the greatest generals in France began their careers of conquest. He had neither eloquence nor imagination; but substituted in their stead a miserable, affected, bombastic style, which, until other circumstances gave him consequence, drew on him general ridicule. Yet against so poor an orator, all the eloquence of the philosophical Girondists, all the terrible powers of his associate Danton, employed in a popular assembly, could not enable them to make an effectual resistance. It may seem trifling to mention, that in a nation where a good deal of prepossession is excited by amiable manners and beauty of external appearance, the person who

[1] [On the very day of his arrest he had signed the warrant for putting sixty persons to death. In the confusion, no person thought of arresting the guillotine. They all suffered.]

ascended to the highest power was not only ill-looking, but singularly mean in person, awkward and constrained in his address, ignorant how to set about pleasing even when he most desired to give pleasure, and as tiresome nearly as he was odious and heartless.

To compensate all these deficiencies, Robespierre had but an insatiable ambition, founded on a vanity which made him think himself capable of filling the highest situation; and therefore gave him daring, when to dare is frequently to achieve. He mixed a false and overstrained, but rather fluent species of bombastic composition, with the grossest flattery to the lowest classes of the people;[1] in consideration of which, they could not but

[1] [The following is M. Dumont's report of Robespierre's maiden speech in the National Assembly;

"I cannot forget the occasion on which a man, who afterwards acquired a fatal celebrity, first brought himself into notice. The clergy were endeavouring, by a subterfuge, to obtain a conference of the orders; and for this purpose deputed the Archbishop of Aix to the Tiers Etat. This prelate expatiated very pathetically upon the distresses of the people, and the poverty of the country parishes. He produced a piece of black bread, which a dog would have rejected, but which the poor were obliged to eat or starve. He besought the Assembly to appoint some members to confer with those deputed by the nobility and clergy, upon the means of bettering the condition of the indigent classes. The Tiers Etat perceived the snare, but dared not openly reject the proposal, as it would render them unpopular with the lower classes. Then a deputy rose, and after professing sentiments in favour of the poor still stronger than those of the prelate, adroitly threw doubts upon the sincerity of the intentions avowed by the clergy. 'Go,' said he to the archbishop, 'and tell your colleagues, that if they are so impatient to assist the suffering poor, they had better come hither and join the friends of the people. Tell them no longer to embarrass our proceedings with affected delays; tell them no longer to endeavour, by unworthy means, to make

receive as genuine the praises which he always bestowed on himself. His prudent resolution to be satisfied with possessing the essence of power, without seeming to desire its rank and trappings, formed another art of cajoling the multitude. His watchful envy, his long-protracted but sure revenge, his craft, which to vulgar minds supplies the place of wisdom, were his only means of competing with his distinguished antagonists. And it seems to have been a merited punishment of the extravagances and abuses of the French Revolution, that it engaged the country in a state of anarchy which permitted a wretch such as we have described, to be for a long period master of her destiny. Blood was his element,[1] like that of the

us swerve from the resolutions we have taken; but as ministers of religion—as worthy imitators of their master—let them forego that luxury which surrounds them, and that splendour which puts indigence to the blush;—let them resume the modesty of their origin, discharge the proud lackeys by whom they are attended, sell their superb equipages, and convert all their superfluous wealth into food for the indigent.'

"This speech, which coincided so well with the passions of the time, did not elicit loud applause, which would have been a bravado and out of place, but was succeeded by a murmur much more flattering: 'Who is he?' was the general question; but he was unknown; and it was not until some time had elapsed that a name was circulated which, three years later, made France tremble. The speaker was Robespierre. Reybas, who was seated next to me, observed, 'This young man is as yet unpractised; he does not know when to stop, but he has a store of eloquence which will not leave him in the crowd.'"—*Souvenirs de Mirabeau*, p. 49.]

[1] ["Robespierre had been a studious youth and a respectable man, and his character contributed not a little to the ascendency which he obtained over rivals, some of whom were corrupt, others impudently profligate, and of whom there were few who had any pretensions to morality. He became bloody, because a

other Terrorists, and he never fastened with so much pleasure on a new victim, as when he was at the same time an ancient associate. In an epitaph,[1] of which the following couplet may serve as a translation, his life was represented as incompatible with the existence of the human race :—

> " Here lies Robespierre—let no tear be shed ;
> Reader, if he had lived thou hadst been dead."

When the report of Robespierre's crimes was brought to the Convention, in which he is most justly charged with the intention of possessing himself of the government, the inconsistent accusation is added, that he plotted to restore the Bourbons ; in support of which it is alleged that a seal, bearing a fleur-de-lis, was found at the Hôtel de Ville. Not even the crimes of Robespierre were thought sufficiently atrocious, without their being mingled with a tendency to Royalism !

With this celebrated demagogue the Reign of Terror may be said to have terminated, although those by whose agency the tyrant fell were as much Terrorists as himself, being, indeed, the principal members of the very committees of pub-

revolutionist soon learns to consider human lives as the counters with which he plays his perilous game ; and he perished after he had cut off every man who was capable of directing the republic, because they who had committed the greatest abominations of the Revolution united against him, that they might secure themselves, and wash their hands in his blood."— *Quarterly Review*, vol. vii. p. 432.

Robespierre wrote, in 1785, an Essay against the Punishment of Death, which gained the prize awarded by the Royal Society of Metz.]

[1] [Passant! ne pleure point son sort :
Car s'il vivait, tu serais mort.]

lic safety and public security, who had been his colleagues in all the excesses of his revolutionary authority. Among the *Thermidoriens*, as the actors in Robespierre's downfall termed themselves, there were names almost as dreadful as that of the dictator, for whom the ninth Thermidor proved the Ides of March. What could be hoped for from Collot D'Herbois, the butcher of the Lyonnois—what from Billaud-Varennes—what from Barras, who had directed the executions at Marseilles after its ephemeral revolt—what from Tallien, whose arms were afterwards died double red, from finger-nails to elbow, in the blood of the unfortunate emigrant gentlemen who were made prisoners at Quiberon? It seemed that only a new set of Septembrisers had succeeded, and that the same horrible principle would continue to be the moving spring of the government, under the direction of other chiefs indeed, but men who were scarce less familiar with its horrors, than was the departed tyrant.

Men looked hopelessly towards the Convention, long rather like the corpse of a legislative assembly, actuated, during its apparent activity, like the supposed vampire, by an infernal spirit not its own, which urged it to go forth and drink blood, but which, deserted by the animating demon, must, it was to be expected, sink to the ground in helpless incapacity. What could be expected from Barrère, the ready panegyrist of Robespierre, the tool who was ever ready to show to the weak and the timid the exact point where their safety recommended to them to join the ranks of the wicked and the

strong? But, in spite of these discouraging circumstances, the feelings of humanity, and a spirit of self-protection, dictating a determined resistance to the renovation of the horrid system under which the country had so long suffered, began to show itself both in the Convention and without doors. Encouraged by the fall of Robespierre, complaints poured in against his agents on all sides. Lebon was accused before the Convention by a deputation from Cambrai; and as he ascended the tribune to put himself on his defence, he was generally hailed as the hangman of Robespierre. The monster's impudence supported him in a sort of defence; and when it was objected to him, that he had had the common executioner to dine in company with him, he answered, "That delicate people might think that wrong; but Lequinio (another Jacobin proconsul of horrible celebrity) had made the same useful citizen the companion of his leisure, and hours of relaxation."[1] He acknowledged

[1] [Mercier, in his *Nouveau Tableau de Paris*, has devoted a chapter to this personage. "What a man," he says, "is that Samson! Insensible to suffering, he was always identified with the axe of execution. He has beheaded the most powerful monarch in Europe, his Queen, Couthon, Brissot, Robespierre —and all this with a composed countenance. He cuts off the head that is brought to him, no matter whose. What does he say? What does he think? I should like to know what passes in his head, and whether he has considered his terrible functions only as a trade. The more I meditate on this man, the president of the great massacre of the human species, overthrowing crowned heads like that of the purest republican, without moving a muscle, the more my ideas are confounded. How did he sleep, after receiving the last words, the last looks of all these severed heads? I really would give a trifle to be in the soul of this man for a few hours. He sleeps, it is said, and, very likely, his con-

with the same equanimity, that an aristocrat being condemned to the guillotine, he kept him lying in the usual posture upon his back, with his eyes turned up to the axe, which was suspended above his throat,—in short, in all the agonies which can agitate the human mind, when within a hair's breadth of the distance of the great separation between Time and Eternity,—until he had read to him, at length, the Gazette which had just arrived, giving an account of a victory gained by the Republican armies. This monster, with Heron, Rossignol, and other agents of terror more immediately connected with Robespierre, were ordered for arrest, and shortly after for execution. Tallien and Barras would have here paused in the retrospect; but similar accusations now began to pour in from every quarter, and when once stated, were such as commanded public attention in the most forcible manner. Those who invoked vengeance, backed the solicitations of each other—the general voice of mankind was with them; and leaders who had shared the excesses of the Reign of Terror, Thermidoriens as they were, began to see some danger of being themselves buried in the ruins of the power which they had overthrown.[1]

science may be at perfect rest. He is sometimes present at the Vaudeville: he laughs, looks at me; my head has escaped him, he knows nothing about it; and as that is very indifferent to him, I never grow weary of contemplating in him the indifference with which he has sent that crowd of men to the other world."]

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 204; Chateaubriand, Etud. Hist. t. i. p, 102; Prudhomme, Victimes de la Rév. t. ii. p. 274. On the scaffold, when the red shirt was thrown over him, he exclaimed. "It is not I who should put it on: it should be sent to

Tallien, who is supposed to have taken the lead in the extremely difficult navigation which lay before the vessel of the state, seems to have experienced a change in his own sentiments, at least his principles of action, inclining him to the cause of humanity. He was also, it is said, urged to so favourable a modification of feelings by his newly married wife, formerly Madame Fontenai, who, bred a royalist, had herself been a victim to the law of suspicion, and was released from a prison[1] to receive the hand, and influence the activity of the republican statesman. Barras, who, as commanding the armed force, might be termed the hero of the 9th Thermidor, was supposed to be also inclined towards humanity and moderation.

Thus disposed to destroy the monstrous system which had taken root in France, and which, indeed, in the increasing impatience of the country, they would have found it impossible to maintain, Tallien and Barras had to struggle, at the same time to diminish and restrict the general demand for revenge, at a time when, if past tyranny was to be strictly enquired into and punished, the doom, as Carrier himself told them, would have involved

the Convention, for I have only executed their orders."—*Biog. Mod.* v. ii. p. 267.]

[1] [She was the daughter of Count Cabarus. During her imprisonment, she had formed a close intimacy with Josephine Beauharnais, afterwards the wife of Napoleon. These ladies were the first to proscribe the revolutionary manners, and seized every opportunity of saving those whom the existing government wished to immolate. The marriage of Madame Fontenai with Tallien was not a happy one. On his return from Egypt, a separation took place, and in 1805 she married M. de Caraman, prince of Chemai.]

every thing in the Convention, not excepting the president's bell and his arm-chair. So powerful were these feelings of resisting a retrospect, that the Thermidoriens declined to support Le Cointre in bringing forward a general charge of inculpation against the two Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, in which accusation, notwithstanding their ultimate quarrel with Robespierre, he showed their intimate connexion with him, and their joint agency in all which had been imputed to him as guilt. But the time was not mature for hazarding such a general accusation, and it was rejected by the Convention with marks of extreme displeasure.[1]

Still, however, the general voice of humanity demanded some farther atonement for two years of outrage, and to satisfy this demand, the Thermidoriens set themselves to seek victims connected more immediately with Robespierre; while they endeavoured gradually to form a party, which, setting out upon a principle of amnesty, and oblivion of the past, should in future pay some regard to that preservation of the lives and property of the governed, which, in every other system saving that which had been just overthrown in France, is regarded as the principal end of civil government. With a view to the consolidation of such a party, the restrictions of the press were removed, and men of talent and literature, silenced during the reign of Robespierre, were once more admitted to exercise their natural influence in favour of civil order and

[1] [Lacretelle, t xii. p. 131.]

religion. Marmontel, La Harpe, and others, who, in their youth, had been enrolled in the list of Voltaire's disciples, and amongst the infidels of the Encyclopédie, now made amends for their youthful errors, by exerting themselves in the cause of good morals, and of a regulated government.[1]

At length followed that general and long-desired measure, which gave liberty to so many thousands, by suspending the law denouncing suspected persons, and emptying at once of their inhabitants the prisons, which had hitherto only transmitted them to the guillotine.[2] The tales which these victims of Jacobinism had to repeat, when revealing the secrets of their prison-house, together with the moral influence produced by such a universal gaol-delivery, and the reunion which it effected amongst friends and relations that had been so long separated, tended greatly to strengthen the hands of the Thermidoriens, who still boasted of that name, and to consolidate a rational and moderate party, both in the capital and provinces. It is, however, by no means to be wondered at, that the liberated sufferers showed a disposition to exercise retribution in a degree which their liberators trembled to indulge, lest it might have recoiled upon themselves. Still both parties united against the remains of the Jacobins.

A singular and melancholy species of force supported these movements towards civilisation and

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 138.]

[2] ["In the space of eight or ten days, out of ten thousand suspected persons, not one remained in the prisons of Paris."—Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 145.]

order. It was levied among the orphans and youthful friends of those who had fallen under the fatal guillotine, and amounted in number to two or three thousand young men, who acted in concert, were distinguished by black collars, and by their hair being plaited and turned up *à la victime*, as prepared for the guillotine. This costume was adopted in memory of the principle of mourning on which they were associated. These volunteers were not regularly armed or disciplined, but formed a sort of free corps, who opposed themselves readily and effectually to the Jacobins, when they attempted their ordinary revolutionary tactics of exciting partial insurrections, and intimidating the orderly citizens by shouts and violence. Many scuffles took place betwixt the parties, with various success; but ultimately the spirit and courage of the young Avengers seemed to give them daily a more decided superiority. The Jacobins dared not show themselves, that is, to avouch their principles, either at the places of public amusement, or in the Palais Royal, or the Tuileries, all of which had formerly witnessed their victories. Their assemblies now took place under some appearance of secrecy, and were held in remote streets, and with such marks of diminished audacity as augured that the spirit of the party was crest-fallen.[1]

Still, however, the Jacobin party possessed dreadful leaders in Billaud-Varennes and Collot d'Herbois, who repeatedly attempted to awaken its terrific energy. These demagogues had joined,

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 147.]

indeed, in the struggle against Robespierre, but it was with the expectation that an Amurath was to succeed an Amurath—a Jacobin a Jacobin—not for the purpose of relaxing the reins of the revolutionary government, far less changing its character. These veteran revolutionists must be considered as separate from those who called themselves Thermidoriens, though they lent their assistance to the revolution on the 9th Thermidor. They viewed as deserters and apostates Legendre, Le Cointre, and others, above all Tallien and Barras, who, in the full height of their career, had paused to take breath, and were now endeavouring to shape a course so different from that which they had hitherto pursued.

These genuine Sans-Culottes endeavoured to rest their own power and popularity upon the same basis as formerly. They reopened the sittings of the Jacobin Club, shut up on the 9th Thermidor. This ancient revolutionary cavern again heard its roof resound with denunciations, by which Vadier, Billaud-Varrennes, and others, devoted to the infernal deities Le Cointre, and those, who, they complained, wished to involve all honest Republicans in the charges brought against Robespierre and his friends. Those threats, however, were no longer rapidly followed by the thunder-bolts which used to attend such flashes of Jacobin eloquence. Men's homes were now in comparison safe. A man might be named in a Jacobin club as an Aristocrat, or a Moderate, and yet live. In fact, the demagogues were more anxious to secure immunity for their past crimes, than at present to incur new

censure. The tide of general opinion was flowing strongly against them, and a singular incident increased its power, and rendered it irresistible.

The Parisians had naturally enough imagined, that the provinces could have no instances of jacobinical cruelty and misrule to describe, more tragic and appalling than the numerous executions which the capital had exhibited every day. But the arrival of eighty prisoners, citizens of Nantes, charged with the usual imputations cast upon suspected persons, undeceived them. These captives had been sent, for the purpose of being tried at Paris before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Fortunately, they did not arrive till after Robespierre's fall, and consequently when they were looked upon rather as oppressed persons than as criminals, and were listened to more as accusers of those by whom they were persecuted, than as culprits on their defence.

It was then that the metropolis first heard of horrors which we have formerly barely hinted at. It was then they were told of crowds of citizens, most of whom had been favourable to the republican order of things, and had borne arms against the Vendéans in their attack upon Nantes; men accused upon grounds equally slight, and incapable of proof, having been piled together in dungeons, where the air was pestilential from ordure, from the carcasses of the dead, and the infectious diseases of the dying. It was then they heard of Republican baptism and Republican marriages—of men, women, and children sprawling together, like toads and frogs in the season of spring, in the waters of the Loire, too shallow to afford them instant

death. It was then they heard of a hundred other abominations—how those uppermost upon the expiring mass prayed to be thrust into the deeper water, that they might have the means of death—and of much more that humanity forbears to detail; but in regard to which, the sharp, sudden, and sure blow of the Parisian guillotine was clemency.[1]

This tale of horrors could not be endured; and the point of immediate collision between the Thermidoriens, compelled and driven onward by the public voice and feeling, and the remnant of the old Jacobin faction, became the accusation of Carrier, the commissioned deputy under whom these unheard-of horrors had been perpetrated. Vengeance on the head of this wretch was so loudly demanded, that it could not be denied even by those influential persons, who, themselves deeply interested in preventing recrimination, would willingly have drawn a veil over the past. Through the whole impeachment and defence, the Thermidoriens stood on the most delicate and embarrassing ground; for horrid as his actions were, he had in general their own authority to plead for them. For example, a letter was produced with these directions to General Haxo—"It is my plan to carry off from that accursed country all manner of subsistence or provisions for man or beast, all forage—in a word, *every thing*—give all the buildings to the flames, and exterminate the whole inhabitants. Oppose their being relieved by a single grain of corn for their subsistence. I give

[1] [Toulongeon, t. v. p. 119; Thiers, t. vii. p. 117; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 162; Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 301.]

thee the most positive, most imperious order. Thou art answerable for the execution from this moment. In a word, leave nothing in that proscribed country—let the means of subsistence, provisions, forage, every thing—absolutely every thing, be removed to Nantes." The representatives of the French nation heard with horror such a fiendish commission; but with what sense of shame and abasement must they have listened to Carrier's defence, in which he proved he was only literally executing the decrees of the very Convention which was now enquiring into his conduct! A lunatic, who, in a lucid moment, hears some one recount the crimes and cruelties he committed in his frenzy, might perhaps enter into their feelings. They were not the less obliged to continue the enquiry, fraught as it was with circumstances so disgraceful to themselves; and Carrier's impeachment and conviction proved the point on which the Thermidoriens, and those who continued to entertain the violent popular opinions, were now at issue.

The atrocious Carrier was taken under the avowed protection of the Jacobin Club, before which audience he made out a case which was heard with applause. He acknowledged his enormities, and pleaded his patriotic zeal; ridiculed the delicacy of those who cared whether an aristocrat died by a single blow, or a protracted death; was encouraged throughout by acclamations, and received assurances of protection from the remnant of that once formidable association. But their magic influence was dissolved—their best orators had fallen successively by each other's impeachment

—and of their most active ruffians, some had been killed or executed, some had fled, or lay concealed, many were in custody, and the rest had become intimidated. Scarce a man who had signalized himself in the French Revolution, but had enjoyed the applause of these demagogues, as versatile in personal attachments, as steady in their execrable principles—scarce one whom they had not been active in sacrificing.

Nevertheless, those members of the Revolutionary Committees, who had so lately lent their aid to dethrone Robespierre, the last idol of the Society, ventured to invoke them in their own defence, and that of their late agents. Billaud-Varennes, addressing the Jacobins, spoke of the Convention as men spared by their clemency during the reign of Robespierre, who now rewarded the Mountain deputies by terming them Men of Blood, and by seeking the death of those worthy patriots, Joseph Lebon and Carrier, who were about to fall under their counter-revolutionary violence. These excellent citizens, he said, were persecuted, merely because their zeal for the Republic had been somewhat ardent—their forms of proceeding a little rash and severe. He invoked the awaking of the Lion —a new revolutionary rising of the people, to tear the limbs and drink the blood[1]—(these were the very words)—of those who had dared to beard them. The meeting dispersed with shouts, and vows to answer to the halloo of their leaders.

[1] ["Briser leurs membres, et boire leur sang."—THIERS, t. vii. p. 121. "Nager dans leur sang."—LACRETELLE, t. xii. p. 157.]

But the opposite party had learned that such menaces were to be met otherwise than by merely awaiting the issue, and then trying the force of remonstrances, or the protection of the law, with those to whom the stronger force is the only satisfying reason.

Well organized, and directed by military officers in many instances, large bands of Anti-jacobins, as we may venture to call the volunteer force already mentioned, appeared in the neighbourhood of the suburbs, and kept in check those from whom the Mother Club expected its strongest aid; while the main body of the young Avengers marched down upon the citadel of the enemy, and invested the Jacobin Club itself in the midst of its sitting. These demagogues made but a wretched defence when attacked by that species of popular violence, which they had always considered as their own especial weapon; and the facility with which they were dispersed amid ridicule and ignominy, served to show how easily, on former occasions, the mutual understanding and spirited exertion of well-disposed men could have at any time prevented criminal violence from obtaining the mastery. Had La Fayette marched against and shut up the Jacobin Club, the world would have been spared many horrors, and in all probability he would have found the task as easy as it proved to those bands of incensed young men.—It must be mentioned, though the recital is almost unworthy of history, that the female Jacobins came to rally and assist their male associates, and that several of them were seized upon and punished in a manner, which might excel-

lently suit their merits, but which shows that the young associates for maintaining order were not sufficiently aristocratic to be under the absolute restraints imposed by the rules of chivalry. It is impossible, however, to grudge the flagellation administered upon this memorable occasion.[1]

When the Jacobins had thus fallen in the popular contest, they could expect little success in the Convention; and the less, that the impulse of general feeling seemed about to recall into that Assembly, by the reversal of their outlawry, the remnant of the unhappy Girondists, and other members, who had been arbitrarily proscribed on the 31st of May. The measure was delayed for some time, as tending to effect a change in the composition of the House, which the ruling party might find inconvenient. At length upwards of sixty deputies were first declared free of the outlawry, and finally readmitted into the bosom of the Convention, with heads which had been so long worn in insecurity, that it had greatly cooled their love of political theory.[2]

In the mean time the government, through means of a revolutionary tribunal, acting however with much more of legal formality and caution than that of Robespierre, made a sacrifice to the public desire of vengeance. Lebon, Carrier, already mentioned, Fouquier-Tainville,[3] the public accuser under

[1] [Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 154.]

[2] [Ibid, t. xii. p. 177.]

[3] [Fouquier-Tainville made an able defence, which he concluded with saying, "I was but the axe of the Convention, and would you punish an axe?" Mercier says, "while standing before the Tribunal, from which he had condemned so many

Robespierre, and one or two others of the same class, selected on account of the peculiar infamy and cruelty of their conduct, were condemned and executed as an atonement for injured humanity.

Here, probably, the Thermidoriens would have wished the reaction to stop; but this was impossible. Barras and Tallien perceived plainly, that with whatever caution and clemency they might proceed towards their old allies of The Mountain, there was still no hope of any thing like reconciliation; and that their best policy was to get rid of them as speedily and as quietly as they could. The Mountain, like a hydra whose heads bourgeoned, according to the poetic expression, as fast as they were cut off, continued to hiss at and menace the government with unwearied malignity, and to agitate the metropolis by their intrigues, which were the more easily conducted that the winter was severe, bread had become scarce and high-priced, and the common people of course angry and discontented. Scarcity is always the grievance of which the lower classes must be most sensible; and when it is remembered that Robespierre, though at the expense of the grossest injustice to the rest of the

victims, he kept constantly writing; but, like Argus, all eyes and ears, he lost nothing that was said or done. He affected to sleep during the public accuser's recapitulation, as if to feign tranquillity, while he had hell in his heart. When led to execution, he answered the hisses of the populace by sinister predictions. At the foot of the scaffold he seemed, for the first time, to feel remorse, and trembled as he ascended it." In early life, Fouquier scribbled poetry for the journals. Some verses of his, in praise of Louis XVI., will be found in the notes to Delille's "*La Pitié.*"]

kingdom, always kept bread beneath a certain *maximum* or fixed price in the metropolis, it will not be wondered at that the population of Paris should be willing to favour those who followed his maxims. The impulse of these feelings, joined to the machinations of the Jacobins, showed itself in many disorders.

At length the Convention, pressed by shame on the one side and fear on the other, saw the necessity of some active measure, and appointed a commission to consider and report upon the conduct of the four most obnoxious Jacobin chiefs, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud-Varennes, Vadier,[1] and Barrère.[2] The report was of course unfavourable; yet upon the case being considered, the Convention were satisfied to condemn them to transportation to Cayenne. Some resistance was offered to this sentence, so mild in proportion to what those who underwent it had been in the habit of inflicting; but it was borne down, and the sentence was carried into execution. Collot d'Herbois, the demolisher and depopulator of Lyons, is said to have died in the common hospital, in consequence of drinking off at once a whole bottle of ardent spirits.[3] Billaud-

[1] [Vadier contrived to conceal himself in Paris, and thereby avoided his sentence. He continued to reside in the capital up to the law of the 12th January, 1816, when he was compelled to quit France. He died at Brussels, in 1828, at the age of ninety-three.]

[2] [Barrère contrived to be left behind, at the isle of Olèron, when his colleagues sailed for Cayenne; upon which Boursault observed, that "it was the first time he had ever failed to sail with the wind." He also remained in France, till the law of January 1816 compelled him to leave it.]

[3] [M. Piton, who, in 1797, was himself transported to

motions which they demanded should be passed; but were defeated by the firmness with which he preferred his duty to his life.[1]

The steadiness of the Convention gave at length confidence to the friends of good order without. The national guards began to muster strong, and the insurgents to lose spirits. They were at length, notwithstanding their formidable appearance, dispersed with very little effort. The tumult, however, was renewed on the two following days; until at length the necessity of taking sufficient measures to end it at once and for ever, became evident to all.

Pichegru, the conqueror of Holland, who chanced to be in Paris at the time, was placed at the head of the national guards and the volunteers, whose character we have noticed elsewhere. At the head of this force, he marched in military order towards the Faubourg Saint Antoine, which had poured forth repeatedly the bands of armed insurgents that were the principal force of the Jacobins.

After a show of defending themselves, the inhabitants of this disorderly suburb were at length obliged to surrender up their arms of every kind. Those pikes, which had so often decided the destinies of France, were now delivered up by cart-loads; and the holy right of insurrection was ren-

[1] ["They held up to him the bloody head of Ferraud; he turned aside with horror: they again presented it, and he bowed before the remains of the martyr; nor would he quit the chair till compelled by the efforts of his friends; and the insurgents, awed with respect, allowed him to retire unmolested."—LACRETELLE, t. xii. p. 221.]

dered in future a more dangerous and difficult task.[1]

Encouraged by the success of this decisive measure, the government proceeded against some of the Terrorists whom they had hitherto spared, but whose fate was now determined, in order to strike dismay into their party. Six Jacobins, accounted among the most ferocious of the class, were arrested as encouragers of the late insurrection, and delivered up to be tried by a military commission. They were all deputies of The Mountain gang. Certain of their doom, they adopted a desperate resolution. Among the whole party, they possessed but one knife, but they resolved it should serve them all for the purpose of suicide. The instant their sentence was pronounced, one stabbed himself with this weapon; another snatched the knife from his companion's dying hand, plunged it in his own bosom, and handed it to the third, who imitated the dreadful example. Such was the consternation of the attendants, that no one arrested the fatal progress of the weapon—all fell either dead or desperately wounded—the last were despatched by the guillotine.[2]

After this decisive victory, and last dreadful catastrophe, Jacobinism, considered as a pure and unmixed party, can scarce be said to have again

[1] [Mignet, t. ii. p. 370; Thiers, t. vii. p. 371; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 220.]

[2] [Romme, Bourbotte, Duquesnoy, Duroi, Soubrani, and Goujon. Five out of the six had voted for the death of the King. See Mignet, t. ii. p. 373; Montgaillard, t. iv. p. 335; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 230.]

raised its head in France, although its leaven has gone to qualify and characterise, in some degree, more than one of the different parties which have succeeded them. As a political sect, the Jacobins can be compared to none that ever existed, for none but themselves ever thought of an organized, regular, and continued system of murdering and plundering the rich, that they might debauch the poor by the distribution of their spoils. They bear, however, some resemblance to the frantic followers of John of Leyden and Knipperdoling, who occupied Munster in the seventeenth century, and committed, in the name of Religion, the same frantic horrors which the French Jacobins did in that of Freedom. In both cases, the courses adopted by these parties were most foreign to, and inconsistent with, the alleged motives of their conduct. The Anabaptists practised every species of vice and cruelty, by the dictates, they said, of inspiration—the Jacobins imprisoned three hundred thousand of their countrymen in name of liberty, and put to death more than half the number, under the sanction of fraternity.

Now at length, however, society began to resume its ordinary course, and the business and pleasures of life succeeded each other as usual.[1]

[1] [At the theatres the favourite air, "Le Reveil du Peuple," was called for several times in the course of an evening. The law of the maximum, and the prohibitions against Christian worship were repealed; and this was followed by an act restoring to the families of those executed during the Revolution such part of their property as had not been disposed of.—LACRETELLE, t. xii. p. 182.]

But even social pleasures brought with them strange and gloomy associations with that Valley of the Shadow of Death, through which the late pilgrimage of France appeared to have lain. An assembly for dancing, very much frequented by the young of both sexes, and highly fashionable, was called the "Ball of the Victims." The qualification for attendance was the having lost some near and valued relation or friend in the late Reign of Terror. The hair and head-dress were so arranged as to resemble the preparations made for the guillotine, and the motto adopted was, "We dance amidst tombs."[1] In no country but France could the incidents have taken place which gave rise to this association; and certainly in no country but France would they have been used for such a purpose.

But it is time to turn from the consideration of the internal government of France, to its external relations; in regard to which the destinies of the country rose to such a distinguished height, that it is hardly possible to reconcile the two pictures of a nation, triumphant at every point against all Europe coalesced against her, making efforts and obtaining victories, to which history had been yet a stranger; while at the same time her affairs at home were directed by ferocious bloodthirsty savages, such as Robespierre. The Republic, regarded in her foreign and domestic relations, might be fancifully compared to the tomb erected over some hero, presenting, without, trophies of arms and the emblems of victory, while, within, there lies only a mangled and corrupted corpse.

[1] [Mignet, t. ii. p. 356; Lacretelle, t. xii. p. 174.]

CHAPTER XVIII.

Retrospective View of the External Relations of France—Her great Military Successes—Whence they arose.—Effect of the Compulsory Levies.—Military Genius and Character of the French.—French Generals.—New Mode of Training the Troops.—Light Troops.—Successive Attacks in Column.—Attachment of the Soldiers to the Revolution.—Also of the Generals.—Carnot.—Effect of the French principles preached to the Countries invaded by their Arms.—Close of the Revolution with the fall of Robespierre.—Reflections upon what was to succeed.

It may be said of victory, as the English satirist has said of wealth, that it cannot be of much importance in the eye of Heaven, considering in what unworthy association it is sometimes found.[1] While the rulers of France were disowning the very existence of a Deity, her armies appeared to move almost as if protected by the especial favour of Providence. Our former recapitulation presented a slight sketch of the perilous state of France in 1793, surrounded by foes on almost

[1] [———" Riches, in effect,
No grace of Heav'n or token of th' Elect;
Giv'n to the fool, the mad, the vain, the evil,
To Ward, to Waters, Chartres, and the Devil."
POPE.]

every frontier, and with difficulty maintaining her ground on any point; yet the lapse of two years found her victorious, nay, triumphantly victorious, on all.

On the north-eastern frontier, the English, after a series of hard-fighting, had lost not only Flanders, on which we left them advancing, but Holland itself, and had been finally driven with great loss to abandon the Continent. The King of Prussia had set out on his first campaign as the chief hero of the coalition, and had engaged that the Duke of Brunswick, his general, should put down the revolution in France as easily as he had done that of Holland. But finding the enterprise which he had undertaken was above his strength; that his accumulated treasures were exhausted in an unsuccessful war; and that Austria, not Prussia, was regarded as the head of the coalition, he drew off his forces, after they had been weakened by more than one defeat, and made a separate peace with France, in which he renounced to the new Republic the sovereignty of all those portions of the Prussian territory which lay on the east side of the Rhine. The king, to make up for these losses, sought a more profitable, though less honourable field of warfare, and concurred with Russia and Austria in effecting by conquest a final partition and appropriation of Poland, on the same unprincipled plan on which the first had been conducted.

Spain, victorious at the beginning of the conquest, had been of late so unsuccessful in opposing the French armies, that it was the opinion of many that her character for valour and patriotism was

lost for ever. Catalonia was over-run by the Republicans, Rosas taken, and no army intervening betwixt the victors and Madrid, the King of Spain was obliged to clasp hands with the murderers of his kinsman, Louis XVI., acknowledge the French Republic, and withdraw from the coalition.

Austria had well sustained her ancient renown, both by the valour of her troops, the resolution of her cabinet, and the talents of one or two of her generals,—the Archduke Charles in particular, and the veteran Wurmser. Yet she too had succumbed under the Republican superiority. Belgium, as the French called Flanders, was, as already stated, totally lost; and war along the Rhine was continued by Austria, more for defence than with a hope of conquest.

So much and so generally had the fortune of war declared in favour of France upon all points, even while she was herself sustaining the worst of evils from the worst of tyrannies. There must have been unquestionably several reasons for such success as seemed to attend universally on the arms of the Republic, instead of being limited to one peculiarly efficient army, or to one distinguished general.

The first and most powerful cause must be looked for in the extraordinary energy of the Republican government, which, from its very commencement, threw all subordinate considerations aside, and devoted the whole resources of the country to its military defence. It was then that France fully learned the import of the word "Re-

quisition," as meaning that which government needs, and which must at all hazards be supplied. Compulsory levies were universally resorted to; and the undoubted right which a state has to call upon each of its subjects to arise in defence of the community, was extended into the power of sending them upon expeditions of foreign conquest.

In the month of March, 1793, a levy of two hundred thousand men was appointed, and took place; but by a subsequent decree of the 21st August in the same year, a more gigantic mode of recruiting was resorted to.

Every man in France able to bear arms was placed at the orders of the state, and being divided into classes, the youngest, to the amount of five hundred thousand, afterwards augmented to a million, were commanded to march for immediate action. The rest of society were to be so disposed of as might best second the efforts of the actual combatants. The married men were to prepare arms and forward convoys,—the women to make uniforms,—the children to scrape lint,—and the old men to preach Republicanism. All property was in like manner devoted to maintaining the war—all buildings were put to military purposes—all arms appropriated to the public service—and all horses, excepting those which might be necessary for agriculture, seized on for the cavalry, and other military services. Representatives of the people were named to march with the various levies,—those terrible commissioners, who punished no fault with a slighter penalty than death. No excuse was sus-

tained for want of personal compliance with the requisition for personal service—no delay permitted—no substitution allowed—actual and literal compliance was demanded from every one, and of what rank soever. Conscripts who failed to appear, resisted, or fled, were subjected to the penalties which attached to emigration.[1]

By successive decrees of this peremptory nature, enforced with the full energy of revolutionary violence, the Government succeeded in bringing into the field, and maintaining, forces to an amount more than double those of their powerful enemies; and the same means of supply—arbitrary requisition, namely—which brought them out, supported and maintained them during the campaign; so that, while there remained food and clothing of any kind in the country, the soldier was sure to be fed, paid, and equipped.

There are countries, however, in which the great numerical superiority thus attained is of little consequence, when a confused levy *en masse* of raw, inexperienced, and disorderly boys, are opposed against the ranks of a much smaller, but a regular and well-disciplined army, such as in every respect is that of Austria. On such occasions the taunting speech of Alaric recurs to recollection,—"The thicker the hay the more easily it is mowed." But this was not found to be the case with the youth of France, who adopted the habits most necessary for a soldier with singular facility and readiness. Military service has been popular amongst them

[1] [Jomini, t. iv. p. 22; Mignet, ii. p. 287.]

in all ages; and the stories of the grandsire in a French cottage have always tended to excite in his descendants ideas familiar with a military condition. They do not come to it as a violent change of life, which they had never previously contemplated, and where all is new and terrible; but as to a duty which every Frenchman is liable to discharge, and which is as natural to him as to his father or grandfather before him.

Besides this propensity, and undoubtedly connected with it, a young Frenchman is possessed of the natural character most desirable in the soldier. He is accustomed to fare hard, to take much exercise, to make many shifts, and to support with patience occasional deprivations. His happy gaiety renders him indifferent to danger, his good-humour patient under hardship. His ingenuity seems to amuse as well as to assist him in the contingencies of a roving life. He can be with ease a cook or an artificer, or what else the occasion may require. His talents for actual war are not less decided. Either in advancing with spirit, or in retreating with order, the Frenchman is one of the finest soldiers in the world; and when requisite, the privates in their army often exhibit a degree of intelligence and knowledge of the profession, which might become individuals of a higher rank in other services. If not absolute water-drinkers, they are less addicted to intoxication than the English soldier, who, perhaps, only brings, to counterbalance the numerous advantages on the part of his opponent, that mastiff-like perseverance and determination in combat, which induces him to repeat, maintain, and

prolong his efforts, under every disadvantage of numbers and circumstances.

The spirits of the Frenchman, such as we have described, did not suffer much from the violent summons which tore him from his home. We have, unhappily, in our own navy, an example, how little men's courage is broken by their being forced into a dangerous service. But comfortless as the state of France then was, and painful as the sights must have been by which the eyes were daily oppressed —closed up too as were the avenues to every civil walk of life, and cheap as they were held in a nation which had become all one vast camp, a youth of spirit was glad to escape from witnessing the desolation at home, and to take with gaiety the chance of death or promotion, in the only line which might now be accounted comparatively safe, and indubitably honourable. The armies with whom these new levies were incorporated were by degrees admirably supplied with officers. The breaking down the old distinctions of ranks had opened a free career to those desirous of promotion; and in times of hard fighting, men of merit are distinguished and get preferment. The voice of the soldier had often its influence upon the officer's preferment; and that is a vote seldom bestowed, but from ocular proof that it is deserved. The revolutionary rulers, though bloody in their resentment, were liberal, almost extravagant, in their rewards, and spared neither gold nor steel, honours nor denunciations, to incite their generals to victory, or warn them against the consequences of defeat.

Under that stern rule which knew no excuse for ill success, and stimulated by opportunities which seemed to offer every prize to honourable ambition, arose a race of generals whom the world scarce ever saw equalled, and of whom there certainly never at any other period flourished so many, in the same service. Such was NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE himself; such were Pichegru and Moreau, doomed to suffer a gloomy fate under his ascendency. Such were those Marshals and Generals who were to share his better fortunes, and cluster around his future throne, as the Paladins around that of Charlemagne, or as the British and Armorican champions begirt the Round Table of Uther's fabled son. In those early wars, and summoned out by the stern conscription, were trained Murat, whose eminence and fall seemed a corollary to that of his brother-in-law—Ney, the bravest of the brave—the calm, sagacious Macdonald—Joubert, who had almost anticipated the part reserved for Buonaparte—Massena, the spoiled Child of Fortune—Augereau, Berthier, Lannes, and many others, whose names began already to stir the French soldier as with the sound of a trumpet.

These adventurers in the race of fame belonged some of them, as Macdonald, to the old military school; some, like Moreau, came from the civil class of society; many arose from origins that were positively mean, and were therefore still more decidedly children of the Revolution. But that great earthquake, by throwing down distinctions of birth and rank, had removed obstacles which would otherwise have impeded the progress of

almost all these distinguished men; and they were, therefore, for the greater part, attached to that new order of affairs which afforded full scope to their talents.

The French armies, thus recruited, and thus commanded, were disciplined in a manner suitable to the materials of which they were composed. There was neither leisure nor opportunity to subject the new levies to all that minuteness of training, which was required by the somewhat pedantic formality of the old school of war. Dumouriez, setting the example, began to show that the principle of revolution might be introduced with advantage into the art of war itself; and that the difference betwixt these new conscripts and the veteran troops to whom they were opposed, might be much diminished by resorting to the original and more simple rules of stratagie, and neglecting many formalities which had been once considered as essential to playing the great game of war with success.[1] It is the constant error of ordinary minds to consider matters of mere routine as equally important with those which are essential, and to entertain as much horror at a disordered uniform as at a confused manœuvre. It was to the honour of the French generals, as men of genius, that in the hour of danger they were able to surmount all the prejudices of a profession which has its pedantry as well as others, and to suit the discipline which they retained to the character of their recruits and the urgency of the time.

[1] [Dumouriez, v. i. p. 398.]

The foppery of the manual exercise was laid aside, and it was restricted to the few motions necessary for effectual use of the musket and bayonet. Easier and more simple manœuvres were substituted for such as were involved and difficult to execute; and providing the line or column could be formed with activity, and that order was preserved on the march, the mere etiquette of military movements was much relaxed. The quantity of light troops was increased greatly beyond the number which had of late been used by European nations. The Austrians, who used to draw from the Tyrol, and from their wild Croatian frontier, the best light troops in the world, had at this time formed many of them into regiments of the line, and thus limited and diminished their own superiority in a species of force which was becoming of greater importance daily. The French, on the contrary, disciplined immense bodies of their conscripts as irregulars and sharpshooters. Their numbers and galling fire frequently prevented their more systematic and formal adversaries from being able to push forward reconnoitring parties, by which to obtain any exact information as to the numbers and disposition of the French, while the Republican troops of the line, protected by this swarm of wasps, chose their time, place, and manner, of advancing to the attack, or retreating, as the case demanded. It is true, that this service cost an immense number of lives; but the French generals were sensible that human life was the commodity which the Republic set the least value upon; and that when death was served with so

wide a feast from one end of France to the other, he was not to be stinted in his own proper banqueting-hall, the field of battle.

The same circumstances dictated another variety or innovation in French tactics, which greatly increased the extent of slaughter. The armies with whom they engaged, disconcerted by the great superiority of numbers which were opposed to them, and baffled in obtaining intelligence by the teazing activity of the French light troops, most frequently assumed the defensive, and taking a strong position, improved perhaps by field-works, waited until the fiery youth of France should come to throw themselves by thousands upon their batteries. It was then that the French generals began first to employ those successive attacks in column, in which one brigade of troops is brought up after another, without interruption, and without regard to the loss of lives, until the arms of the defenders are weary with slaying, and their line being in some point or other carried, through the impossibility of every where resisting an assault so continued and desperate, the battle is lost, and the army is compelled to give way; while the conquerors can, by the multitudes they have brought into action, afford to pay the dreadful price which they have given for the victory.

In this manner the French generals employed whole columns of the young conscripts, termed from that circumstance, "food for the cannon" (*chair à canon*), before disease had deprived them of bodily activity, or experience had taught them the dangers of the profession on which they entered

with the thoughtless vivacity of schoolboys. It also frequently happened, even when the French possessed no numerical superiority upon the whole, that by the celerity of their movements, and the skill with which they at once combined and executed them, they were able suddenly to concentrate such a superiority upon the point which they meant to attack, as ensured them the same advantage.

In enumerating the causes of the general success of the Republican arms, we must not forget the moral motive—the interest which the troops took in the cause of the war. The army, in fact, derived an instant and most flattering advantage from the Revolution, which could scarce be said of any other class of men in France, excepting the peasant. Their pay was improved, their importance increased. There was not a private soldier against whom the highest ranks of the profession was shut, and many attained to them. Massena was originally a drummer, Ney a common hussar, and there were many others who arose to the command of armies from the lowest condition. Now this was a government for a soldier to live and flourish under, and seemed still more advantageous when contrasted with the old monarchical system, in which the prejudices of birth interfered at every turn with the pretensions of merit, where a *roturier* could not rise above a subaltern rank, and where all offices of distinction were, as matters of inheritance, reserved for the *grande noblesse* alone.

But besides the rewards which it held out to its soldiers, the service of the Republic had this irresistible charm for the soldiery—it was victorious.

The conquests which they obtained, and the plunder which attended those conquests, attached the victors to their standards, and drew around them fresh hosts of their countrymen. "*Vive la Republique!*" became a war-cry, as dear to their army as in former times the shout of Dennis Mountjoie, and the Tricoloured flag supplied the place of the Oriflamme. By the confusion, the oppression, the bloodshed of the Revolution, the soldiers were but little affected. They heard of friends imprisoned or guillotined, indeed;[1] but a military man, like a monk, leaves the concerns of the civil world behind him, and while he plays the bloody game for his own life or death with the enemy who faces him, has little time to think of what is happening in the native country which he has abandoned. For any other acquaintance with the politics of the Republic, they were indebted to flowery speeches in the Convention, resounding with the praises of the troops, and to harangues of the representatives accompanying the armies, who never failed by flattery and largesses to retain possession of the affection of the soldiers, whose attachment was so essential to their safety. So well did they accomplish this, that while the Republic flourished, the armies were so much attached to that order of things, as to desert successively some of their most favourite leaders, when they became objects of suspicion to the fierce democracy.

The generals, indeed, had frequent and practical

[1] Such was the fate of Moreau, who, on the eve of one of his most distinguished victories, had to receive the news that his father had been beheaded.

experience, that the Republic could be as severe with her military as with her civil subjects, and even more so, judging by the ruthlessness with which they were arrested and executed, with scarce the shadow of a pretext. Yet this did not diminish the zeal of the survivors. If the revolutionary government beheaded, they also paid, promised, and promoted; and amid the various risks of a soldier's life, the hazard of the guillotine was only a slight addition to those of the sword and the musket,[1] which, in the sanguine eye of courage and ambition, joined to each individual's confidence in his own good luck, did not seem to render his chance much worse. When such punishment arrived, the generals submitted to it as one of the casualties of war; nor was the Republic worse or more reluctantly served by those who were left.

Such being the admirable quality and talents, the mode of thinking and acting, which the Republican, or rather Revolutionary, armies possessed, it required only the ruling genius of the celebrated Carnot, who, bred in the department of engineers, was probably one of the very best tacticians in the

[1] The risk was considered as a matter of course. Madame La Roche-Jacquelein informs us that General Quentineau, a Republican officer who had behaved with great humanity in La Vendée, having fallen into the hands of the insurgents, was pressed by L'Escure, who commanded them, not to return to Paris. "I know the difference of our political opinions," said the Royalist; "but why should you deliver up your life to those men with whom want of success will be a sufficient reason for abridging it?"—"You say truly," replied Quentineau; "but as a man of honour, I must present myself in defence of my conduct wherever it may be impeached." He went, and perished by the guillotine accordingly.—[*Mémoires*, p. 130.]

world, to bring them into effectual use. He was a member of the frightful Committee of Public Safety; but it has been said in his defence, that he did not meddle with its atrocities, limiting himself entirely to the war department, for which he showed so much talent, that his colleagues left it to his exclusive management.[1] In his own individual person he constituted the whole *bureau militaire*, or war-office of the Committee of Public Safety, corresponded with and directed the movements of the armies, as if inspired by the Goddess of Victory herself. He first daringly claimed for France her natural boundaries—that is, the boundaries most convenient for her. The Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, he assigned as the limits of her dominions; and asserted that all within these, belonging to other powers, must have been usurpations on France, and were unhesitatingly to be resumed as such. And he conquered by his genius the countries which his ambition claimed. Belgium became an integral part of the French Republic—Holland was erected into a little dependent democracy, as an outwork for defending the great nation—the Austrians were foiled on the Rhine—the King of Sardinia driven from Savoy—and schemes realized which Louis XIV. never dared to dream of. In return for the complaisance exhibited by the Committee towards himself, he did not express any scruples, if he entertained such, concerning the mode in which they governed the interior of their unhappy country. Yet, notwithstanding his skill

[1] [Carnot's Mémoires, p. 230.]

and his caution, the blighting eye of Robespierre was fixed on him, as that of the snake which watches its victim. He could not dispense with the talents of Carnot in the career of victory; but it is well known, that if his plans on any occasion had miscarried, the security of his head would have become very precarious.[1]

It must also be allowed, that although the French armies were attached to the Republic, and moved usually under direction of a member of the Committee of Public Security, they did not adopt, in their brutal extent, the orders for exterminating warfare which were transmitted to them by their masters. At one time a decree was passed, refusing quarter to such of the allied troops as might be made prisoners; but the French soldiers could not be prevailed on to take a step which must have aggravated so dreadfully the necessary horrors of war. When we consider how the civil government of France were employed, when the soldiers refused their sanction to this decree, it seems as if Humanity had fled from cities and the peaceful dwellings of men, to seek a home in camps and combats.

One important part of the subject can be here treated but slightly. We allude to the great advantages derived by the French arms from the reception of their political doctrines at this period among the people whom they invaded. They proclaimed aloud that they made war on castles and palaces, but were at peace with cottages; and as on

[1] [Carnot, p. 255; Thibaudeau, t. i. p. 37.]

some occasions besieging generals are said to have bribed the governor of a place to surrender it, by promising they would leave in his unchallenged possession the military chest of the garrison, so the French in all cases held out to the populace the plunder of their own nobles, as an inducement for them to favour, at least not to oppose, the invasion of their country. Thus their armies were always preceded by their principles. A party favourable to France, and listening with delight to the doctrines of liberty and equality, was formed in the bosom of each neighbouring state, so that the power of the invaded nation was crushed, and its spirit quenched, under a sense of internal discontent and discord. The French were often received at once as conquerors and deliverers by the countries they invaded; and in almost all cases, the governments on which they made war were obliged to trust exclusively to such regular forces as they could bring into the field being deprived of the inappreciable advantage of general zeal among their subjects in their behalf. It was not long ere the inhabitants of those deceived countries found that the fruits of the misnamed tree of liberty resembled those said to grow by the Dead Sea—fair and goodly to the eye, but to the taste all filth and bitterness.

We are now to close our review of the French Revolution, the fall of Robespierre being the era

at which its terrors began to ebb and recede, nor did they ever again rise to the same height. If we look back at the whole progress of the change, from the convocation of the States-General to the 9th Thermidor, as the era of that man's overthrow was called, the eye in vain seeks for any point at which even a probability existed of establishing a solid or permanent government. The three successive constitutions of 1791, 1792, and 1795, the successive work of Constitutionalists, Girondists, and Jacobins, possessed no more power to limit or arrest the force of the revolutionary impulse, than a bramble or brier to stop the progress of a rock rushing down from a precipice. Though ratified and sworn to, with every circumstance which could add solemnity to the obligation, each remained, in succession, a dead letter. France, in 1795 and 1796, was therefore a nation without either a regular constitution, or a regular administration; governed by the remnant of an Assembly called a Convention, who continued sitting, merely because the crisis found them in possession of their seats, and who administered the government through the medium of Provisional Committees, with whose dictates they complied implicitly, and who really directed all things, though in the Convention's name.

In the mean time, and since those strange scenes had commenced, France had lost her King and nobles, her church and clergy, her judges, courts, and magistrates, her colonies and commerce. The greater part of her statesmen and men of note had perished by proscription, and her orators' eloquence had been cut short by the guillotine. She had no

finances—the bonds of civil society seem to have retained their influence from habit only. The nation possessed only one powerful engine, which France called her own, and one impulsive power to guide it—These were her army and her ambition. She resembled a person in the delirium of a fever, who has stripped himself in his frenzy of all decent and necessary clothing, and retains in his hand only a bloody sword; while those who have endeavoured to check his fury, lie subdued around him. Never had so many great events successively taken place in a nation, without affording something like a fixed or determined result, either already attained, or soon to be expected.

Again and again did reflecting men say to each other,—This unheard-of state of things, in which all seems to be temporary and revolutionary, will not, cannot last;—and especially after the fall of Robespierre, it seemed that some change was approaching. Those who had achieved that work, did not hold on any terms of security the temporary power which it had procured them. They rather retained their influence by means of the jealousy of two extreme parties, than from any confidence reposed in themselves. Those who had suffered so deeply under the rule of the revolutionary government, must have looked with suspicion on the Thermidoriens as regular Jacobins, who had shared all the excesses of the period of Terror, and now employed their power in protecting the perpetrators. On the other hand, those of the Revolutionists who yet continued in the bond of Jacobin fraternity, could not forgive Tallien and Barras the

silencing the Jacobin Clubs, the exiling Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes, putting to death many other patriots, and totally crushing the system of revolutionary government. In fact, if the thoroughbred Revolutionists still endured the domination of Tallien and Barras, it was only because it shielded them from the reaction, or retributive measures threatened by the moderate party. Matters, it was thought, could not remain in this uncertain state, nor was the present temporary pageant of government likely to linger long on the scene. But, by whom was that scene next to be opened? Would a late returning to ancient opinions induce a people, who had suffered so much through innovation, to recall either absolutely, or upon conditions, the banished race of her ancient princes? Or would a new band of Revolutionists be permitted by Heaven, in its continued vengeance, to rush upon the stage? Would the supreme power become the prize of some soldier as daring as Cæsar, or some intriguing statesman as artful as Octavius? Would France succumb beneath a Cromwell or a Monk, or again be ruled by a cabal of hackneyed statesmen, or an Institute of Theoretical Philosophy, or an anarchical Club of Jacobins? These were reflections which occupied almost all bosoms. But the hand of Fate was on the curtain, and about to bring the scene to light.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

CHAPTER I.

Corsica.—Family of Buonaparte.—Napoleon born 15th August, 1769—His early Habits—Sent to the Royal Military School at Brienne—His great Progress in Mathematical Science—Deficiency in Classical Literature.—Anecdotes—Removed to the General School of Paris.—When in his Seventeenth Year, appointed Second Lieutenant of Artillery—His early Politics—Promoted to a Captaincy.—Pascal Paoli.—Napoleon sides with the French Government against Paoli—And is banished from Corsica—Visits Marseilles, and publishes the Souper de Beaucaire.

THE island of Corsica was, in ancient times, remarkable as the scene of Seneca's exile, and in the last century was distinguished by the memorable stand which the natives made in defence of their liberties against the Genoese and French, during a war which tended to show the high and indomitable spirit of the islanders, united as it is with the fiery and vindictive feelings proper to their country and climate.

In this island, which was destined to derive its future importance chiefly from the circumstance, NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, or BONAPARTE,[1] had

[1] There was an absurd debate about the spelling of the name, which became, as trifles often do, a sort of party question. Buonaparte had disused the superfluous *u*, which his father retained in

his origin. His family was noble, though not of much distinction, and rather reduced in fortune. Flattery afterwards endeavoured to trace the name which he had made famous, into remote ages, and researches were made through ancient records, to discover that there was one Buonaparte who had written a book,[1] another who had signed a treaty —a female of the name who had given birth to a pope,[2] with other minute claims of distinction, which Napoleon justly considered as trivial, and unworthy of notice. He answered the Emperor of Austria, who had a fancy of tracing his son-in-law's descent from one of the petty sovereigns of Treviso, that he was the Rodolph of Hapsbourg of his family; and to a genealogist, who made a

the name, and adopted a more modern spelling. This was represented on one side as an attempt to bring his name more nearly to the French idiom; and, as if it had been a matter of the last moment, the vowel was obstinately replaced in the name, by a class of writers who deemed it politic not to permit the successful general to relinquish the slightest mark of his Italian extraction, which was in every respect impossible for him either to conceal or to deny, even if he had nourished such an idea. In his baptismal register, his name is spelled Napoleone Bonaparte, though the father subscribes, Carlo Buonaparte. The spelling seems to have been quite indifferent. ["During Napoleon's first campaign in Italy, he dropped the *u*. In this change he had no other motive than to assimilate the orthography to the pronunciation, and to abbreviate his signature."—BOURRIENNE, t. i. p. 3.]

[1] [The book alluded to is entitled "Ragguaglio Storico di tutto l'occorso, giorno per giorno, nel Sacco de Roma dell anno 1527, scritto da Jacopo Buonaparte, gentiluomo Samminiatese, chi vi si trovò presente." In 1568, a Giuseppe Buonaparte published a comedy, entitled "La Vedova." Copies of both these works are in the British Museum.]

[2] [Paul the Fifth.]

merit of deducing his descent from some ancient line of Gothic princes, he caused reply to be made, that he dated his patent of nobility from the battle of Montenotte, that is, from his first victory.[1]

All that is known with certainty of Napoleon's family may be told in few words. The Buonapartes were a family of some distinction in the middle ages;[2] their names are inscribed in the Golden Book at Treviso, and their armorial bearings are to be seen on several houses in Florence. But attached, during the civil war, to the party of the Ghibellines, they of course were persecuted by the Guelphs; and being exiled from Tuscany, one of the family took refuge in Corsica, and there established himself and his successors, who were regularly enrolled among the noble natives of the island, and enjoyed all the privileges of gentle blood.

The father of Napoleon, Charles Buonaparte, was the principal descendant of this exiled family. He was regularly educated at Pisa, to the study of the law, and is stated to have possessed a very handsome person, a talent for eloquence, and a vivacity of intellect, which he transmitted to his son.

[1] ["I sent Clarke to Florence as ambassador, where he employed himself in nothing but turning over the old musty records of the place, in search of proofs of the nobility of my family. He so plagued me with letters upon the subject, that I was forced to bid him cease from troubling either his head or mine with this nonsense about nobility,—that I was the *first* of my family."—NAPOLEON, *Voice*, &c. v. i. p. 401.]

[2] ["They were of Tuscan origin. In the middle ages they figured as senators of the republics of Florence, San Miniato, Bologna, Sarzana, and Treviso, and as prelates attached to the Court of Rome."—NAPOLEON, *Memoirs*, v. iii. p. 7.]

He was a patriot also and a soldier, and assisted at the gallant stand made by Paoli against the French. It is said he would have emigrated along with Paoli, who was his friend, but was withheld by the influence of his father's brother, Lucien Buonaparte, who was Archdeacon of the Cathedral of Ajaccio, and the wealthiest person of the family.

It was in the middle of civil discord, fights, and skirmishes, that Charles Buonaparte married Lætitia Ramolini, one of the most beautiful young women of the island, and possessed of a great deal of firmness of character. She partook the dangers of her husband during the years of civil war, and is said to have accompanied him on horseback in some military expeditions, or perhaps hasty flights, shortly before her being delivered of the future emperor.[1] Though left a widow in the prime of life, she had already borne her husband thirteen children, of whom five sons and three daughters survived him. I. Joseph, the eldest, who, though placed by his brother in an obnoxious situation, as intrusive King of Spain, held the reputation of a good and moderate man. II. Napoleon himself. III. Lucien, scarce inferior to his brother in ambition and talent. IV. Louis, the merit of whose character consists in its unpretending worth, and who renounced a crown rather than consent to the oppression of his subjects. V. Jerome, whose disposition is said to have been chiefly marked by a tendency to dissipation. The females were, I. Maria Anne, after-

[1] [Las Casas, v. i. p. 108.]

wards Grand Duchess of Tuscany, by the name of Eliza.[1] II. Maria Annonciada, who became Maria Pauline, Princess of Borghese.[2] III. Carlotta, or Caroline, wife of Murat, and Queen of Naples.

The family of Buonaparte being reconciled to the French government after the emigration of Paoli, enjoyed the protection of the Count de Marbœuf, the French Governor of Corsica, by whose interest Charles was included in a deputation of the nobles of the island, sent to Louis XVI. in 1779. As a consequence of this mission, he was appointed to a judicial situation, that of assessor of the Tribunal of Ajaccio, the income of which aided him to maintain his increasing family, which the smallness of his patrimony, and some habits of expense, would otherwise have rendered difficult. Charles Buonaparte, the father of Napoleon, died at the age of about forty years, of an ulcer in the stomach, on the 24th February, 1785.[3] His celebrated son fell a victim to the same disease. During Napoleon's grandeur, the community of

[1] [Died at Trieste, 9th August, 1820. "On accidentally reading, at St Helena, the account of her death, Napoleon exclaimed, 'Eliza has just shown us the way; death, which seemed to have overlooked our family, now begins to strike it. I shall be the next to follow her to the grave.'"—ANTOMMARCHI, v. i. p. 384.]

[2] [She died at the Borghese Palace, near Florence, 9th June, 1825.]

[3] ["I was quietly pursuing my studies whilst my father was struggling against the violence of a painful agony. He died, and I had not the consolation to close his eyes: that sad duty was reserved for Joseph, who acquitted himself of it with all the zeal of an affectionate son."—NAPOLEON, Antommarchi, v. i. p. 240.]

Montpellier expressed a desire to erect a monument to the memory of Charles Buonaparte. His answer was both sensible and in good taste. "Had I lost my father yesterday," he said, "it would be natural to pay his memory some mark of respect consistent with my present situation. But it is twenty years since the event, and it is one in which the public can take no concern. Let us leave the dead in peace."

The subject of our narrative was born upon the 15th day of August, 1769, at his father's house in Ajaccio, forming one side of a court which leads out of the Rue Charles.[1] We read with interest, that his mother's good constitution, and bold character of mind, having induced her to attend mass upon the day of his birth, (being the Festival of the Assumption,) she was obliged to return home immediately, and as there was no time to prepare a bed or bedroom, she was delivered of the future victor upon a temporary couch prepared for her accommodation, and covered with an ancient piece of tapestry, representing the heroes of the Iliad. The infant was christened by the name of Napoleon, an obscure saint, who had dropped to leeward, and fallen altogether out of the calendar, so that his namesake never knew which day he was to celebrate as the festival of his patron. When questioned on this subject by the bishop who con-

[1] ["The patrimonial house of Napoleon, at present in the possession of M. Ramolini, member of the Chamber of Deputies for the department of Corsica, continues an object of great veneration with travellers and military men."—BENSON'S *Corsica*, p. 4.]

firmed him, he answered smartly, that there were a great many saints, and only three hundred and sixty-five days to divide amongst them. The politeness of the Pope promoted the patron in order to compliment the god-child, and Saint Napoleon des Ursins was accommodated with a festival. To render this compliment, which no one but a Pope could have paid, still more flattering, the feast of Saint Napoleon was fixed for the 15th August, the birth-day of the Emperor, and the day on which he signed the Concordat.[1] So that Napoleon had the rare honour of promoting his patron saint.

The young Napoleon had, of course, the simple and hardy education proper to the natives of the mountainous island of his birth, and in his infancy was not remarkable for more than that animation of temper, and wilfulness and impatience of inactivity, by which children of quick parts and lively sensibility are usually distinguished.[2] The winter of the year was generally passed by the family of his father at Ajaccio, where they still preserve and exhibit, as the ominous plaything of Napoleon's boyhood, the model of a brass cannon, weighing about thirty pounds.[3] We leave it to philosophers to enquire, whether the future love of war was suggested by the accidental possession of such a toy; or whether the tendency of the mind dictated the selection of it; or, lastly, whether the nature of the pastime, corresponding with the taste which

[1] [Las Casas, v. i. p. 120.]

[2] ["In my infancy I was noisy and quarrelsome, and feared nobody. I beat one, scratched another, and made myself formidable to all."—Napoleon, Antommarchi, t. i. p. 327.]

[3] Benson's Sketches of Corsica, p. 4.

chose it, may not have had each their action and reaction, and contributed between them to the formation of a character so warlike.

The same traveller who furnishes the above anecdote, gives an interesting account of the country retreat of the family of Buonaparte, during the summer.

Going along the sea-shore from Ajaccio towards the Isle Sanguiniere, about a mile from the town, occur two stone pillars, the remains of a door-way, leading up to a dilapidated villa, once the residence of Madame Buonaparte's half-brother on the mother's side, whom Napoleon created Cardinal Fesch.[1] The house is approached by an avenue, surrounded and overhung by the cactus and other shrubs, which luxuriate in a warm climate. It has a garden and a lawn, showing amidst neglect, vestiges of their former beauty, and the house is surrounded by shrubberies, permitted to run to wilderness. This was the summer residence of Madame Buonaparte and her family. Almost enclosed by the wild olive, the cactus, the clematis, and the almond-tree, is a very singular and isolated granite rock, called Napoleon's grotto, which seems to have resisted the decomposition which has taken place around. The remains of a small summer-house are visible beneath the rock, the entrance to which is nearly closed by a luxuriant fig-tree. This was Buonaparte's frequent retreat, when the vacations of the school at which he studied permitted

[1] The mother of Letitia Ramolini, wife of Carlo Buonaparte, married a Swiss officer in the French service, named Fesch, after the death of Letitia's father.

him to visit home.—How the imagination labours to form an idea of the visions, which, in this sequestered and romantic spot, must have arisen before the eyes of the future hero of a hundred battles!

The Count de Marbœuf, already mentioned as Governor of Corsica, interested himself in the young Napoleon, so much as to obtain him an appointment [April, 1779] to the Royal Military School at Brienne, which was maintained at the royal expense, in order to bring up youths for the engineer and artillery service. The malignity of contemporary historians has ascribed a motive of gallantry towards Madame Buonaparte as the foundation of this kindness; but Count Marbœuf had arrived at a period of life when such connexions are not to be presumed, nor did the scandal receive any currency from the natives of Ajaccio.

Nothing could be more suitable to the nature of young Buonaparte's genius, than the line of study which thus fortunately was opened before him. His ardour for the abstract sciences amounted to a passion, and was combined with a singular aptitude for applying them to the purposes of war, while his attention to pursuits so interesting and exhaustless in themselves, was stimulated by his natural ambition and desire of distinction. Almost all the scientific teachers at Brienne, being accustomed to study the character of their pupils, and obliged by their duty to make memoranda and occasional reports on the subject, spoke of the talents of Buonaparte, and the progress of his studies, with admiration. Circumstances of various kinds, exaggerated or invented, have been circulated con-

cerning the youth of a person so remarkable. The following are given upon good authority.[1]

The conduct of Napoleon among his companions, was that of a studious and reserved youth, addicting himself deeply to the means of improvement, and rather avoiding than seeking the usual temptations to dissipation of time. He had few friends, and no intimates; yet at different times, when he chose to exert it, he exhibited considerable influence over his fellow-students, and when there was any joint plan to be carried into effect, he was frequently chosen dictator of the little republic.

In the time of winter, Buonaparte upon one occasion engaged his companions in constructing a fortress out of the snow, regularly defended by ditches and bastions, according to the rules of fortification. It was considered as displaying the great powers of the juvenile engineer in the way of his profession, and was attacked and defended by the students, who divided into parties for the purpose, until the battle became so keen that their superiors thought it proper to proclaim a truce.

The young Buonaparte gave another instance of address and enterprise upon the following occasion. There was a fair held annually in the neighbourhood of Brienne, where the pupils of the Military School used to find a day's amusement; but on account of a quarrel betwixt them and the country people upon a former occasion, or for some such

[1] They were, many years since, communicated to the author by Messrs Joseph and Louis Law, brothers of General Lauriston, Buonaparte's favourite aide-de-camp. These gentlemen, or at least Joseph, were educated at Brienne, but at a later period than Napoleon. Their distinguished brother was his contemporary.

cause, the masters of the institution had directed that the students should not, on the fair day, be permitted to go beyond their own precincts, which were surrounded with a wall. Under the direction of the young Corsican, however, the scholars had already laid a plot for securing their usual day's diversion. They had undermined the wall which encompassed their exercising ground, with so much skill and secrecy, that their operations remained entirely unknown till the morning of the fair, when a part of the boundary unexpectedly fell, and gave a free passage to the imprisoned students, of which they immediately took the advantage, by hurrying to the prohibited scene of amusement.

But although on these, and perhaps other occasions, Buonaparte displayed some of the frolic temper of youth, mixed with the inventive genius and the talent for commanding others by which he was distinguished in after time, his life at school was in general that of a recluse and severe student, acquiring by his judgment, and treasuring in his memory, that wonderful process of almost unlimited combination, by means of which he was afterwards able to simplify the most difficult and complicated undertakings. His mathematical teacher was proud of the young islander, as the boast of his school, and his other scientific instructors had the same reason to be satisfied.

In languages Buonaparte was less a proficient, and never acquired the art of writing or spelling French, far less foreign languages, with accuracy or correctness; nor had the monks of Brienne any reason to pride themselves on the classical profi-

ciency of their scholar. The full energies of his mind being devoted to the scientific pursuits of his profession, left little time or inclination for other studies.

Though of Italian origin, Buonaparte had not a decided taste for the fine arts, and his taste in composition seems to have leaned towards the grotesque and the bombastic. He used always the most exaggerated phrases; and it is seldom, if ever, that his bulletins present those touches of sublimity which are founded on dignity and simplicity of expression.

Notwithstanding the external calmness and reserve of his deportment, he who was destined for such great things, had, while yet a student at Brienne, a full share of that ambition for distinction and dread of disgrace, that restless and irritating love of fame, which is the spur to extraordinary attempts. Sparkles of this keen temper sometimes showed themselves. On one occasion, a harsh superintendent imposed on the future Emperor, for some trifling fault, the disgrace of wearing a penitential dress, and being excluded from the table of the students, and obliged to eat his meal apart. His pride felt the indignity so severely, that it brought on a severe nervous attack; to which, though otherwise of good constitution, he was subject upon occasions of extraordinary irritation. Father Petrault,[1] the professor of mathe-

[1] [Father Petrault was subsequently secularised, and joined the army of Italy, where he served his pupil in the capacity of secretary. On Buonaparte's return from Egypt, he found him a corpulent financier; but commencing usurer, he was soon

matics, hastened to deliver his favourite pupil from the punishment by which he was so much affected.

It is also said that an early disposition to the popular side distinguished Buonaparte even when at Brienne. Pichegru, afterwards so celebrated, who acted as his monitor in the military school, (a singular circumstance,) bore witness to his early principles, and to the peculiar energy and tenacity of his temper. He was long afterwards consulted whether means might not be found to engage the commander of the Italian armies in the royal interest. "It will be but lost time to attempt it," said Pichegru. "I knew him in his youth—his character is inflexible—he has taken his side, and he will not change it."[1]

In October, 1784, Napoleon Buonaparte, then only fifteen years old, was, though under the usual age, selected by M. de Keralio,[2] the inspector of the twelve military schools, to be sent to have his

reduced to beggary. Napoleon granted him a pension sufficient for his subsistence.—Las Casas, v. i. p. 119.]

[1] [Las Casas, v. i. p. 120.]

[2] [The following is a copy of Keralio's report:—"M. de Buonaparte, (Napoleon,) born 15th August, 1769, height four feet, ten inches, ten lines, has finished his fourth course; of good constitution, excellent health, of submissive character, upright, grateful, and regular in conduct; has always been distinguished for application to the mathematics. He is tolerably well acquainted with history and geography; he is deficient in the ornamental branches, and in Latin, in which he has only completed his fourth course. He will make an excellent sailor: he deserves to pass to the military school at Paris."—M. de Keralio, a highly accomplished man, who had been tutor in the royal family of Bavaria, died in 1793.]

education completed in the general school of Paris. It was a compliment paid to the precocity of his extraordinary mathematical talent, and the steadiness of his application. While at Paris he attracted the same notice as at Brienne; and among other society, frequented that of the celebrated Abbé Raynal, and was admitted to his literary parties. His taste did not become correct, but his appetite for study in all departments was greatly enlarged; and notwithstanding the quantity which he daily read, his memory was strong enough to retain, and his judgment sufficiently ripe to arrange and digest, the knowledge which he then acquired; so that he had it at his command during all the rest of his busy life. Plutarch was his favourite author; upon the study of whom he had so modelled his opinions and habits of thought, that Paoli afterwards pronounced him a young man of an antique caste, and resembling one of the classical heroes.[1]

Some of his biographers have, about this time, ascribed to him the anecdote of a certain youthful pupil of the military school, who desired to ascend in the car of a balloon with the aeronaut Blanchard, and was so mortified at being refused, that he made an attempt to cut the balloon with his sword.[2] The story has but a flimsy support, and indeed

[1] ["Paoli often patted me on the head, saying, 'You are one of Plutarch's men.' He divined that I should be something extraordinary."—Napoleon, *Voice*, &c. v. i. p. 251.]

[2] ["This story, though incorrect as to Napoleon, was true as to one of his comrades, Dupont de Chambon."—Arnoult, *Vie de Napoleon*, p. 3.]

does not accord well with the character of the hero, which was deep and reflective, as well as bold and determined, and not likely to suffer its energies to escape in idle and useless adventure.

A better authenticated anecdote states, that at this time he expressed himself disrespectfully towards the king in one of his letters to his family. According to the practice of the school, he was obliged to submit the letter to the censorship of M. Domairon, the professor of belles lettres, who, taking notice of the offensive passage, insisted upon the letter being burnt, and added a severe rebuke. Long afterwards, in 1802, M. Domairon appeared at Napoleon's levee; when the first consul reminded his old tutor good-humouredly, that times had changed considerably since the burning of the letter.

Napoleon Buonaparte, in his seventeenth year, [September, 1785,] received his first commission as second lieutenant in the regiment of La Fère, or first artillery, then quartered at Valence. He mingled with society when he joined his regiment, more than he had hitherto been accustomed to do; mixed in public amusements, and exhibited the powers of pleasing which he possessed in an uncommon degree, when he chose to exert them. His handsome and intelligent features, with his active and neat, though slight figure, gave him additional advantages. His manners could scarcely be called elegant, but made up in vivacity and variety of expression, and often in great spirit and energy, for what they wanted in grace and polish.

In 1786, he became an adventurer for the honours of literature also, and was anonymously a competitor for the prize offered by the Academy of Lyons on Raynal's question, "What are the principles and institutions, by application of which mankind can be raised to the highest pitch of happiness?" The prize was adjudged to the young soldier. It is impossible to avoid feeling curiosity to know the character of the juvenile theories respecting government, advocated by one who at length attained the power of practically making what experiments he pleased. Probably his early ideas did not exactly coincide with his more mature practice; for when Talleyrand, many years afterwards, got the Essay out of the records of the Academy, and returned it to the author, Buonaparte destroyed it, after he had read a few pages.[1] He also laboured under the temptation of writing a journey from Valence to Mount Cenis, after the manner of Sterne, which he was fortunate enough finally to resist.[2] The affectation which pervades Sterne's peculiar style of composition, was not likely to be simplified under the pen of Buonaparte.

In 1789, Buonaparte, then quartered at Auxonne, had composed a work, which might form two volumes, on the political, civil, and military history of Corsica. He addressed a letter to General Paoli, then residing in London, on the subject of the proposed work, and the actual condition of his coun-

[1] [Las Casas, v. i. p. 129. A copy of the Essay had, however, been taken by his brother Louis. It was published in 1826 by Gourgaud.]

[2] [Las Casas, v. i. p. 135.]

trymen.[1] He also submitted it to the Abbé Raynal, who recommended the publication of it.[2] With this view, Buonaparte invited M. Joly, a bookseller of Dole, to visit him at Auxonne. He came, he says, and found the future Emperor in a naked barrack room, the sole furniture of which consisted of a wretched bed without curtains, a table placed in the embrasure of a window, loaded with books and papers, and two chairs. His brother Louis, whom he was teaching mathematics, lay on a wretched mattrass, in an adjoining closet. M. Joly and the author agreed on the price of the impression of the book, but Napoleon was at the time in uncertainty whether he was to remain at Auxonne or not. The work was never printed, nor has a trace of it been discovered.[3]

In 1790, Buonaparte, still at Auxonne, composed a political tract in the form of a letter to M. de Buttafuoco, major-general, and deputy of the Corsican noblesse in the National Assembly. A hundred copies were printed and sent to Corsica; where it was adopted and republished by the patriotic society of Ajaccio,[4] who passed a resolu-

[1] [A copy of this letter is given in the Appendix, No. I. A few months after it was written, Paoli, in consequence of Mirabeau's motion for the recall of the Corsican exiles, left England for Corsica.]

[2] [Las Casas, v. ii. p. 345.]

[3] ["This passage is not correct. I recollect very well, that, on my account, a larger and more commodious apartment was assigned to my brother than to the other officers of the same rank. I had a good chamber and an excellent bed. My brother directed my studies, but I had proper masters, even in literature."—Louis Buonaparte, p. 26.]

[4] [Norvins, t. i. p. 19.]

tion, attaching the epithet *infamous*, to the name of their noble deputy.[1]

Sterner times were fast approaching, and the nation was now fully divided by those factions which produced the Revolution. The officers of Buonaparte's regiment were also divided into Royalists and Patriots; and it is easily to be imagined, that the young and the friendless stranger and adventurer should adopt that side to which he had already shown some inclination, and which promised to open the most free career to those who had only their merit to rely upon. "Were I a general officer," he is alleged to have said, "I would have adhered to the King; being a subaltern, I join the Patriots."

There was a story current, that in a debate with some brother officers on the politics of the time, Buonaparte expressed himself so outrageously, that they were provoked to throw him into the Saone, where he had nearly perished. But this is an inaccurate account of the accident which actually befell him. He was seized with the cramp when bathing in the river. His comrades saved him with difficulty; but his danger was matter of pure chance.

[1] [The Letter to Buttafuoco is a diatribe against that Corsican nobleman, who had been, during the wars with France, a strong opponent of the liberties of his country. He had been, of course, the enemy of the family of Paoli, to which Napoleon at this time was warmly attached. We have preserved the composition entire, because, though the matter be uninteresting, the rough and vivid style of invective is singularly characteristic of the fiery youth, whose bosom one of his teachers compared to a volcano surcharged with molten granite, which it poured forth in torrents, whenever his passions were excited.—See Appendix, No. II.]

Napoleon has himself recorded that he was a warm patriot during the whole sitting of the National Assembly; but that, on the appointment of the Legislative Assembly, he became shaken in his opinions. If so, his original sentiments regained force; for we shortly afterwards find him entertaining such as went to the extreme heights of the Revolution.

Early in the year 1792, Buonaparte became a captain in the artillery by seniority; and in the same year, being at Paris, he witnessed the two insurrections of the 20th June and 10th August. He was accustomed to speak of the insurgents as the most despicable banditti, and to express with what ease a determined officer could have checked these apparently formidable, but dastardly and unwieldy masses.[1] But, with what a different feeling of interest would Napoleon have looked on that infuriated populace, those still resisting though overpowered Swiss, and that burning palace, had any seer whispered to him, "Emperor that shall be, all this blood and massacre is but to secure your future empire!" Little anticipating the potent effect which the passing events were to bear on his own fortune, Buonaparte, anxious for the safety or his mother and family, was now desirous to exchange France for Corsica, where the same things were acting on a less distinguished stage.

It was a singular feature in the French Revolution, that it brought out from his retirement the celebrated Pascal Paoli, who, long banished from

[1] [See *ante*, vol. viii. p. 310-11; Las Casas, v. iii. p. 143; and Bourrienne, t. i. p. 48.]

Corsica, the freedom and independence of which he had so valiantly defended, returned from exile with the flattering hope of still witnessing the progress of liberty in his native land. On visiting Paris, he was received there with enthusiastic veneration, and the National Assembly and Royal Family contended which should show him most distinction. He was created president of the department, and commander of the national guard of his native island, and used the powers intrusted to him with great wisdom and patriotism.

But Paoli's views of liberty were different from those which unhappily began to be popular in France. He was desirous of establishing that freedom, which is the protector, not the destroyer of property, and which confers practical happiness, instead of aiming at theoretical perfection. In a word, he endeavoured to keep Corsica free from the prevailing infection of Jacobinism; and in reward, he was denounced in the Assembly. Paoli, summoned to attend for the purpose of standing on his defence, declined the journey on account of his age, but offered to withdraw from the island.

A large proportion of the inhabitants took part with the aged champion of their freedom, while the Convention sent an expedition, at the head of which were La Combe Saint Michel,[1] and Salicetti,[2] one of the Corsican deputies to the Convention, with

[1] [La Combe Saint Michel was afterwards employed by Napoleon in Italy, Spain, and Germany. He died in 1812.]

[2] [During the reign of Joseph, he was appointed minister of police at Naples, where he died in 1809.]

the usual instructions for bloodshed and pillage issued to their commissaries.[1]

Buonaparte was in Corsica, upon leave of absence from his regiment, when these events were taking place; and although he himself, and Paoli, had hitherto been on friendly terms, the young artillery officer did not hesitate which side to choose. He embraced that of the Convention with heart and hand; and his first military exploit was in the civil war of his native island. In the year 1793, he was despatched from Bastia, in possession of the French party, to surprise his native town Ajaccio, then occupied by Paoli or his adherents. Buonaparte was acting provisionally, as commanding a battalion of national guards. He landed in the gulf of Ajaccio with about fifty men, to take possession of a tower called the Torre di Capitello, on the opposite side of the gulf, and almost facing the city. He succeeded in taking the place; but as there arose a gale of wind which prevented his communicating with the frigate which had put him ashore, he was besieged in his new conquest by the opposite faction, and reduced to such distress, that he and his little garrison were obliged to feed on horse-flesh. After five days he was relieved by the frigate, and evacuated the tower, having first in vain attempted to blow it up. The Torre di Capitello still shows marks of the damage it then sustained, and its remains may be looked on as a curiosity, as the first scene of *his* combats, before whom

[1] [Napoleon, Memoirs, v. iv. p. 51.]

——"Temple and tower
Went to the ground."[1]

The strength of Paoli increasing, and the English preparing to assist him, Corsica became no longer a safe or convenient residence for the Buonaparte family. Indeed, both Napoleon and his brother Joseph, who had distinguished themselves as partisans of the French, were subjected to a decree of banishment from their native island; and Madame Buonaparte, with two of her daughters, set sail under their protection, and settled for a time, first at Nice, and afterwards at Marseilles, where the family remained in obscurity, until the dawning prospects of Napoleon afforded him the means of assisting them.

One small fountain at Ajaccio is pointed out as the only ornament which, in after days, his bounty bestowed on his birth-place.[2] He might perhaps

[1] Such is the report of the Corsicans concerning the alleged first exploit of their celebrated countryman. See Benson's *Sketches*, p. 4. But there is room to believe that Buonaparte had been in action so early as February 1793. Admiral Truguet, with a strong fleet, and having on board a large body of troops, had been at anchor for several weeks in the Corsican harbours, announcing a descent upon Sardinia. At length, having received on board an additional number of forces, he set sail on his expedition. Buonaparte is supposed to have accompanied the admiral, of whose talent and judgment he is made in the Saint Helena MSS., to speak with great contempt. Buonaparte succeeded in taking some batteries in the straits of Saint Bonifacio; but the expedition proving unsuccessful, they were speedily abandoned. [For an account of the expedition to Sardinia, see *Napoleon's Memoirs*, v. i. p. 5.]

[2] ["As you quit the town, the first object that presents itself is a little fountain on the left, which, except the pavement of the quay, is the only public work of Buonaparte, for the place of his birth."—BENSON.]

think it impolitic to do any thing which might remind the country he ruled that he was not a child of her soil, nay, was in fact very near having been born an alien, for Corsica was not united to, or made an integral part of France, until June 1769, a few weeks only before Napoleon's birth. This stigma was repeatedly cast upon him by his opponents, some of whom reproached the French with having adopted a master, from a country from which the ancient Romans were unwilling even to choose a slave; and Napoleon may have been so far sensible to it, as to avoid showing any predilection to the place of his birth, which might bring the circumstance strongly under observation of the great nation, with which he and his family seemed to be indissolubly united. But as a traveller already quoted, and who had the best opportunities to become acquainted with the feelings of the proud islanders, has expressed it,—"The Corsicans are still highly patriotic, and possess strong local attachment—in their opinion, contempt for the country of one's birth is never to be redeemed by any other qualities. Napoleon, therefore, certainly was not popular in Corsica, nor is his memory cherished there."[1]

The feelings of the parties were not unnatural on either side. Napoleon, little interested in the land of his birth, and having such an immense stake in that of his adoption, in which he had every thing to keep and lose,[2] observed a policy towards Cor-

[1] Benson's Sketches of Corsica, p. 121.

[2] Not literally, however; for it is worth mentioning, that when he was in full-blown possession of his power, an inheritance

sica which his position rendered advisable; and who can blame the high-spirited islanders, who, seeing one of their countrymen raised to such exalted eminence, and disposed to forget his connexion with them, returned with slight and indifference the disregard with which he treated them?

On his return from Corsica, Buonaparte had arrived at Nice, and was preparing to join his regiment, when General Dugear, who commanded the artillery of "the army of Italy," then encamped round the city, required his services, and employed him in several delicate operations. Shortly after, the insurrection of Marseilles broke out—a movement consequent upon the arrest of the leaders of the Girondist party in the Convention, on the first Prairial (31st May); and which extended with violence into the departments. The insurgents of Marseilles organized a force of six thousand men, with which they took possession of Avignon, and thereby intercepted the communications of the army of Italy. The general-in-chief being much embarrassed by this circumstance, sent Buonaparte to the insurgents, to try to induce him to let the convoys pass. In July he went to Marseilles and Avignon, had interviews with the leaders, convinced them that it was their own interest not to excite the resentment of the army of Italy, and in fine secured the transit of the convoys.

During his residence at Marseilles, when sent

fell to the family, situated near Ajaccio, and was divided amongst them. The First Consul, or Emperor, received an olive garden as his share.—*Sketches of Corsica.*

to the insurgents, having, he says, an opportunity of observing all the weakness and incoherence of their means of resistance, he drew up a little pamphlet, which he called "*Le Souper de Beaucaire*," and which he published in that city. "He endeavoured," he says, "to open the eyes of these frantic people, and predicted that the only result of their revolt would be to furnish a pretext to the men of blood of the day, for sending the principal persons amongst them to the scaffold." "It produced," he adds, "a very powerful effect, and contributed to calm the agitation which prevailed."[1] During these proceedings Toulon had surrendered to the English. Buonaparte was ordered on service to the siege of that town, and joined the army on the 12th of September.

[1] Montholon, t. iii. p. 14.—Nothing can be more inaccurate than to term the *Souper de Beaucaire* a Jacobin pamphlet, although it is unquestionably written to urge the Federalists to submit to their inevitable fate, and avert extremity by doing so in time. The work is nearly free from the cant language of the day. There is no mention of liberty, equality, fraternity, or the rights of man, &c.—no abstract discussion of political principles. The whole merits of the dispute betwixt Paris and the departments are hurried over with little or no argument. Buonaparte urges the Marseillois to submission, not because the principles which dictated their insurrection were erroneous, but because they had not means to maintain successful resistance; not because they had been confuted by the Jacobins in argument, but because they were unequal to the task of contending with them by force. In after time, however, he called in and destroyed every copy of the *Souper de Beaucaire* which could be found, so that only one remained, from which the recent reprint of Monsieur Pancoucke has been executed. [As remarkable specimens of Napoleon's easy style and habits of thinking, the opening and closing parts of this pamphlet are given, translated into English, in No. III. of the Appendix to this volume.]

CHAPTER II.

Siege of Toulon.—Recapitulation.—Buonaparte appointed to the Command of the Artillery at Toulon—Finds every thing in disorder—His Plan for obtaining the Surrender of the Place—Adopted.—Anecdotes during the Siege.—Allied Troops resolve to evacuate Toulon—Dreadful Particulars of the Evacuation—England censured on this occasion.—Lord Lynedoch.—Fame of Buonaparte increases, and he is appointed Chief of Battalion in the Army of Italy — Joins Headquarters at Nice. — On the Fall of Robespierre, Buonaparte superseded in command—Arrives in Paris in May, 1795, *to solicit employment—He is unsuccessful.—Retrospect of the Proceedings of the National Assembly.—Difficulties in forming a new Constitution.—Appointment of the Directory—of the Two Councils of Elders and of Five Hundred.—Nation at large, and Paris in particular, disgusted with their pretensions.—Paris assembles in Sections.— General Danican appointed their Commander-in-Chief. — Menou appointed by the Directory to disarm the National Guards—but suspended for incapacity—Buonaparte appointed in his room.— The day of the Sections.— Conflict betwixt the Troops of the Convention under Buonaparte, and those of the Sections of Paris under Danican.— The latter defeated with much slaughter.—Buonaparte appointed Second in Command of the Army of the Interior—then General-in-Chief—Marries Madame Beauharnois—Her Character.—Buonaparte immediately afterwards joins the Army of Italy.*

THE siege of Toulon was the first incident of importance, which enabled Buonaparte to distin-

guish himself in the eyes of the French Government, and of the world at large.

Buonaparte's professional qualifications were still better vouched than the soundness of his political principles, though these were sufficiently decided. The notes which the inspectors of the Military School always preserve concerning their scholars, described his genius as being of the first order; and to these he owed his promotion to the rank of a lieutenant-colonel of artillery, with the command of the artillery during this siege.

We have already mentioned that a general diffidence, and dread of the proceedings of the Jacobins, joined to the intrigues of the Girondists, had, after the fall of the latter party, induced several of the principal towns in France to take arms against the Convention, or rather against the Jacobin party, who had attained the complete mastery in that body. We have also said that Toulon, taking a more decided step than either Marseilles or Lyons, had declared for the King and the Constitution of 1791, and invited the support of the English and Spanish squadrons, who were cruising upon the coast. A disembarkation was made, and a miscellaneous force, hastily collected, of Spaniards, Sardinians, Neapolitans, and English, was thrown into the place.

This was one of the critical periods when vigorous measures, on the part of the allies, might have produced marked effects on the result of the war. Toulon is the arsenal of France, and contained at that time immense naval stores, besides a fleet of seventeen sail of the line ready for sea, and thirteen

or fourteen more, which stood in need of refitting. The possession of it was of the last importance, and with a sufficiently large garrison, or rather an army strong enough to cover the more exposed points without the town, the English might have maintained their footing at Toulon, as they did at a later period both at Lisbon and Cadiz. The sea would, by maintaining the defensive lines necessary to protect the roadstead, have been entirely at the command of the besieged; and they could have been supplied with provisions in any quantity from Sicily, or the Barbary States, while the besiegers would have experienced great difficulty, such was the dearth in Provence at the time, in supporting their own army. But to have played this bold game, the presence of an army, instead of a few battalions, would have been requisite; and a general of consummate ability must have held the chief command. This was the more especially necessary, as Toulon, from the nature of the place, must have been defended by a war of posts, requiring peculiar alertness, sagacity, and vigilance. On the other hand, there were circumstances very favourable for the defence, had it been conducted with talent and vigour. In order to invest Toulon on the right and left side at once, it was necessary there should be two distinct blockading armies; and these could scarce communicate with each other, as a steep ridge of mountains, called Pharon, must interpose betwixt them. This gave opportunity to the besieged to combine their force, and choose the object of attack when they sallied; while, on the other

hand, the two bodies of besiegers could not easily connect their operations, either for attack or defence.

Lord Mulgrave,[1] who commanded personally in the place, notwithstanding the motley character of the garrison, and other discouraging circumstances, began the defence with spirit. Sir George Keith Elphinstone[2] also defeated the Republicans at the mountain pass, called Ollioules. The English for some time retained possession of this important gorge, but were finally driven out from it. Cartaux, a republican general whom we have already mentioned,[3] now advanced on the west of Toulon, at the head of a very considerable army, while General Lapoype blockaded the city on the east, with a part of the army of Italy. It was the object of the French to approach Toulon on both sides of the mountainous ridge, called Pharon. But on the east the town was covered by the strong and regular fort of La Malgue, and on the west side of the road by a less formidable work, called Malbosquet. To support Malbosquet, and to protect the entrance to the roadstead and harbour, the English engineers fortified with great skill an eminence, called Hauteur de Grasse. The height bent into a sort of bay, the two promontories of which were secured by redoubts, named L'Eguillette and Balagnier, which communicated with and supported the new fortification, which the English had termed fort Mulgrave.

[1] [His lordship died the 7th of April, 1831.]
[2] [In 1797 created Baron Keith. He died in 1823.]
[3] [See *ante*, p. 175]

Several sallies and skirmishes took place, in most of which the Republicans were worsted. Lieutenant-General O'Hara arrived from Gibraltar with reinforcements, and assumed the chief command.

Little could be said for the union of the commanders within Toulon; yet their enterprises were so far successful, that the French began to be alarmed at the slow progress of the siege. The dearth of provisions was daily increasing, the discontent of the people of Provence was augmented; the Catholics were numerous in the neighbouring districts of Vivarais and Lower Languedoc; and Barras and Freron wrote from Marseilles [Dec. 1] to the Convention, suggesting that the siege of Toulon should be raised, and the besieging army withdrawn beyond the Durance.[1] But while weaker minds were despairing, talents of the first order were preparing to achieve the conquest of Toulon.

When Napoleon arrived at the scene of action, and had visited the posts of the besieging army, he found so many marks of incapacity, that he could not conceal his astonishment. Batteries had been erected for destroying the English shipping, but they were three gun-shots' distance from the point which they were designed to command; red-hot

[1] This letter appeared in the *Moniteur*, 10th December, 1793. But as the town of Toulon was taken a few days afterwards, the Convention voted the letter a fabrication. ["This was unfair; for it was genuine, and gave a just idea of the opinion that prevailed when it was written, respecting the issue of the siege, and of the difficulties that prevailed in Provence."—NAPOLEON, *Memoirs*, v. i. p. 22.]

balls were preparing, but they were not heated in furnaces beside the guns, but in the country-houses in the neighbourhood at the most ridiculous distance, as if they had been articles of easy and ordinary transportation. Buonaparte with difficulty obtained General Cartaux's permission to make a shot or two by way of experiment; and when they fell more than half-way short of the mark, the general had no excuse but to rail against the aristocrats, who had, he said, spoiled the quality of the powder with which he was supplied.[1]

The young officer of artillery, with prudence, and at the same time with spirit, made his remonstrances to the member of Convention, Gasparin,[2] who witnessed the experiment, and explained the necessity of proceeding more systematically, if any successful result was expected.

At a council of war, where Gasparin presided, the instructions of the Committee of Public Safety were read, directing that the siege of Toulon should be commenced according to the usual forms, by investing the body of the place, in other words, the city itself. The orders of the Committee of Public Safety were no safe subject of discussion or criticism for those who were to act under them; yet Buonaparte ventured to recommend their being departed from on this important occasion. His

[1] [Las Casas, v. i. p. 140.]

[2] [It was to Gasparin that Napoleon was indebted for the triumph of his plan over the objections of the committees of the Convention. He preserved a grateful recollection of this circumstance, as appears by his will. It was Gasparin, he used to say, who had first opened his career.—Las Casas, v. i. p. 144.]

comprehensive genius had at once discovered a less direct, yet more certain manner, of obtaining the surrender of the place. He advised, that, neglecting the body of the town, the attention of the besiegers should be turned to attain possession of the promontory called Hauteur de Grasse, by driving the besiegers from the strong work of fort Mulgrave, and the two redoubts of L'Eguillette and Balagnier, by means of which the English had established the line of defence necessary to protect the fleet and harbour. The fortress of Malbosquet, on the same point, he also recommended as a principal object of attack. He argued, that if the besiegers succeeded in possessing themselves of these fortifications, they must obtain a complete command of the roads where the English fleet lay, and oblige them to put to sea. They would, in the same manner, effectually command the entrance of the bay, and prevent supplies or provisions from being thrown into the city. If the garrison were thus in danger of being totally cut off from supplies by their vessels being driven from their anchorage, it was natural to suppose that the English troops would rather evacuate Toulon, than remain within the place, blockaded on all sides, until they might be compelled to surrender by famine.

The plan was adopted by the council of war after much hesitation, and the young officer by whom it was projected received full powers to carry it on. He rallied round him a number of excellent artillery officers and soldiers; assembled against Toulon more than two hundred pieces of cannon, well served; and stationed them so advantageously,

that he annoyed considerably the English vessels in the roads, even before he had constructed those batteries on which he depended for reducing forts Mulgrave and Malbosquet, by which they were in a great measure protected.

In the meanwhile, General Doppet, formerly a physician, had superseded Cartaux, whose incapacity could no longer be concealed by his rhodomontading language; and, wonderful to tell, it had nearly been the fate of the ex-doctor to take Toulon, at a time when such an event seemed least within his calculation. A tumultuary attack of some of the young French Carmagnoles on a body of Spanish troops which garrisoned fort Mulgrave, had very nearly been successful. Buonaparte galloped to the spot, hurrying his reluctant commander along with him, and succours were ordered to advance to support the attack, when an aide-de-camp was shot by Doppet's side; on which the medical general, considering this as a bad symptom, pronounced the case desperate, and, to Buonaparte's great indignation, ordered a retreat to be commenced. Doppet being found as incapable as Cartaux, was in his turn superseded by Dugommier, a veteran who had served for fifty years, was covered with scars, and as fearless as the weapon he wore.

From this time the commandant of artillery, having the complete concurrence of his general, had no doubt of success. To ensure it, however, he used the utmost vigilance and exertion, and exposed his person to every risk.

One of the dangers which he incurred was of a singular character. An artilleryman being shot at

the gun which he was serving, while Napoleon was visiting a battery, he took up the dead man's rammer, and, to give encouragement to the soldiers, charged the gun repeatedly with his own hands. In consequence of using this implement he caught an infectious cutaneous complaint, which, being injudiciously treated and thrown inward, was of great prejudice to his health, until after his Italian campaigns, when he was completely cured by Dr Corvissart; after which, for the first time, he showed that tendency to *embonpoint*, which marked the latter part of his life.[1]

Upon another occasion, while Napoleon was overlooking the construction of a battery, which the enemy endeavoured to interrupt by their fire, he called for some person who could write, that he might dictate an order. A young soldier stepped out of the ranks, and resting the paper on the breast-work, began to write accordingly. A shot from the enemy's battery covered the letter with earth the instant it was finished. "Thank you—we shall have no occasion for sand this bout," said the military secretary. The gaiety and courage of the remark drew Buonaparte's attention on the young man, who was the celebrated General Junot, afterwards created Duke D'Abrantes.[2] During this siege, also, he discovered the talents of Duroc, afterwards one of his most faithful adherents. In these and many other instances, Buonaparte showed his extensive knowledge of mankind, by the deep sagacity which enabled him to discover and attach

[1] [Las Casas, v. i. p. 147.] [2] Ibid. v. i. p. 154.

to him those whose talents were most capable of rendering him service.

Notwithstanding the influence which the commandant of artillery had acquired, he found himself occasionally thwarted by the members of the Convention upon mission to the siege of Toulon, who latterly were Fréron, Ricord, Salicetti, and the younger Robespierre. These representatives of the people, knowing that their commission gave them supreme power over generals and armies, never seem to have paused to consider whether nature or education had qualified them to exercise it, with advantage to the public and credit to themselves. They criticised Buonaparte's plan of attack, finding it impossible to conceive how his operations, being directed against detached fortifications at a distance from Toulon, could be eventually the means of placing the town itself with facility in their hands. But Napoleon was patient and temporizing; and having the good opinion of Salicetti, and some intimacy with young Robespierre, he contrived to have the works conducted according to his own plan.

The presumption of these dignitaries became the means of precipitating his operations. It was his intention to complete his proposed works against fort Mulgrave before opening a large and powerful battery, which he had constructed with great silence and secrecy against Malbosquet, so that the whole of his meditated assault might confound the enemy by commencing at the same time. The operations being shrouded by an olive plantation, had been completed without being observed by the

English, whom Buonaparte proposed to attack on the whole line of defence simultaneously. Messrs Fréron and Robespierre, however, in visiting the military posts, stumbled upon this masked battery; and having no notion why four mortars and eight twenty-four pounders should remain inactive, they commanded the fire to be opened on Malbosquet without any farther delay.

General O'Hara, confounded at finding this important post exposed to a fire so formidable and unexpected, determined by a strong effort to carry the French battery at once. Three thousand men[1] were employed in this sally; and the general himself, rather contrary to what is considered the duty of the governor of a place of importance, resolved to put himself at their head. The sally was at first completely successful; but while the English pursued the enemy too far, in all the confidence of what they considered as assured victory, Buonaparte availed himself of some broken ground and a covered way, to rally a strong body of troops, bring up reserves, and attack the scattered English both in flank and rear. There was a warm skirmish, in which Napoleon himself received a bayonet wound in the thigh, by which, though a serious injury, he was not, however, disabled. The English were thrown into irretrievable confusion, and retreated, leaving their general wounded, and a prisoner in the hands of the enemy. It is singular, that during his long warfare, Buonaparte was never personally engaged with the British,

[1] [Napoleon says six thousand. Gourgaud, t. i. p. 17.]

except in his first, and at Waterloo, his last and fatal battle. The attack upon Acre can scarce be termed an exception, as far as his own person was concerned.

The loss of their commandant, added to the discouragement which began to prevail among the defenders of Toulon, together with the vivacity of the attack which ensued, seem finally to have disheartened the garrison. Five batteries were opened on fort Mulgrave, the possession of which Buonaparte considered as ensuring success. After a fire of twenty-four hours, Dugommier and Napoleon resolved to try the fate of a general attack, for which the representatives of the people showed no particular zeal. The attacking columns advanced before day, during a heavy shower of rain. They were at first driven back on every point by the most determined opposition; and Dugommier, as he saw the troops fly in confusion, exclaimed, well knowing the consequences of bad success to a general of the Republic, "I am a lost man?"[1] Renewed efforts, however, at last prevailed; the Spanish artillery-men giving way on one point, the fort fell [Dec. 18] into the possession of the French, who showed no mercy to its defenders.[2]

Three hours, according to Buonaparte, after the fort was taken, the representatives of the people appeared in the trenches, with drawn swords, to congratulate the soldiers on their successful valour,

[1] [Gourgaud, t. i. p. 24.]

[2] [Jomini, t. iv. p. 223; Toulongeon, t. iv. p. 88; Napoleon's Memoirs, v. i. p. 25; Rivington's Annual Register, 1793, p. 415.

and hear from their commandant of artillery, the reiterated assurance, that, this distant fort being gained, Toulon was now their own. In their letter to the Convention, the deputies gave a more favourable account of their own exploits, and failed not to represent Ducos, Salicetti, and young Robespierre, as leading the attack with sabre in hand, and, to use their own phrase, showing the troops the road to victory.[1] On the other hand, they ungraciously forgot, in their despatches, to mention so much as the name of Buonaparte, to whom the victory was entirely to be ascribed.[2]

In the mean time, Napoleon's sagacity was not deceived in the event. The officers of the allied troops, after a hurried council of war, resolved to evacuate Toulon, since the posts gained by the French must drive the English ships from their anchorage, and deprive them of a future opportunity of retreating, if they neglected the passing moment. Lord Hood alone urged a bolder resolution, and recommended the making a desperate effort to regain fort Mulgrave, and the heights which it commanded. But his spirited counsel was rejected, and the evacuation resolved on;[3] which the panic of the foreign troops, especially the Neapolitans, would have rendered still more horrible than it proved, but for the steadiness of the British seamen.

The safety of the unfortunate citizens, who had

[1] [Moniteur, 28th December.]

[2] ["Amongst those who chiefly distinguished themselves are the citizens Buonaparte, commandant of the artillery, Arena, and Gervoni."—Dugommier *to the Minister of War.*]

[3] [Rivington's Annual Register, 1793, p. 415.]

invoked their protection, was not neglected even amid the confusion of the retreat. The numerous merchant vessels and other craft, offered means of transportation to all, who, having to fear the resentment of the Republicans, might be desirous of quitting Toulon. Such was the dread of the victors' cruelty, that upwards of fourteen thousand persons accepted this melancholy refuge.[1] Mean time there was other work to do.

It had been resolved, that the arsenal and naval stores, with such of the French ships as were not ready for sea, should be destroyed; and they were set on fire accordingly. This task was in a great measure intrusted to the dauntless intrepidity of Sir Sydney Smith, who carried it through with a degree of order, which, every thing considered, was almost marvellous. The assistance of the Spaniards was offered and accepted; and they undertook the duty of scuttling and sinking two vessels used as powder magazines, and destroying some part of the disabled shipping. The rising conflagration growing redder and redder, seemed at length a great volcano, amid which were long distinctly seen the masts and yards of the burning vessels, and which rendered obscurely visible the advancing bodies of Republican troops, who attempted on different points to push their way into the place. The Jacobins began to rise in the town upon the flying Royalists; —horrid screams and yells of vengeance, and revolutionary chorusses, were heard to mingle with the

[1] [James's Naval History, v. i. p. 115; Thiers, t. vi. p. 59.—"The total number borne away amounted to 14,877."—*Mémoires de Joubert*, p. 75.]

cries and plaintive entreaties of the remaining fugitives, who had not yet found means of embarkation. The guns from Malbosquet, now possessed by the French, and turned on the bulwarks of the town, increased the uproar. At once a shock, like that of an earthquake, occasioned by the explosion of many hundred barrels of gunpowder, silenced all noise save its own, and threw high into the midnight heaven a thousand blazing fragments, which descended, threatening ruin wherever they fell. A second explosion took place, as the other magazine blew up, with the same dreadful effects.

This tremendous addition to the terrors of the scene, so dreadful in itself, was owing to the Spaniards setting fire to those vessels used as magazines, instead of sinking them, according to the plan which had been agreed upon. Either from ill-will, carelessness, or timidity, they were equally awkward in their attempts to destroy the dismantled ships intrusted to their charge, which fell into the hands of the French but little damaged. The British fleet, with the flotilla crowded with fugitives which it escorted, left Toulon without loss, notwithstanding an ill-directed fire maintained on them from the batteries which the French had taken.

It was upon this night of terror, conflagration, tears, and blood, that the star of Napoleon first ascended the horizon; and though it gleamed over many a scene of horror ere it set, it may be doubtful whether its light was ever blended with those of one more dreadful.

The capture of Toulon crushed all the hopes of resistance to the Jacobins, which had been cherished

in the south of France. There was a strong distrust excited against England, who was judged only desirous to avail herself of the insurrection of these unhappy citizens to cripple and destroy the naval power of France, without the wish of effectually assisting the Royalists. This was an unjust belief, but it cannot be denied that there were specious grounds for the accusation. The undertaking the protection of a city in such a situation as that of Toulon, if the measure was embraced at all, should have been supported by efforts worthy of the country whose assistance was implored and granted. Such efforts were not made, and the assistance actually afforded was not directed by talent, and was squandered by disunion. The troops showed gallantry; but the leaders, excepting the naval officers, evinced little military skill, or united purpose of defence. One gentleman, then in private life, chancing to be in Toulon at the time, distinguished himself as a volunteer,[1] and has since achieved a proud career in the British army. Had he, or such as he, been at the head of the garrison, the walls of Toulon might have seen a battle like that of Barossa, and a very different result of the siege might probably have ensued.

So many of the citizens of Toulon concerned in the late resistance had escaped, by the means provided by the English, that Republican vengeance could not collect its victims in the usual numbers.[2] Many

[1] Mr Graham of Balgowan, now Lord Lynedoch. He marched out on one of the sorties, and when the affair became hot, seized the musket and cartouch-box of a fallen soldier, and afforded such an example to the troops, as contributed greatly to their gaining the object desired.

[2] [Jomini, t. iv. p. 226; Lacretelle, t. xi. p. 189.]

were shot, however, and it has been said that Buonaparte commanded the artillery, by which, as at Lyons, they were exterminated; and also that he wrote a letter to Fréron and the younger Robespierre, congratulating them and himself on the execution of these aristocrats, and signed Brutus Buonaparte, Sans-Culotte. If he actually commanded at this execution, he had the poor apology, that he must do so or himself perish; but, had the fact and the letter been genuine, there has been enough of time since his downfall to prove the truth of the accusation, and certainly enough of writers disposed to give these proofs publicity. He himself positively denied the charge; and alleged that the victims were shot by a detachment of what was called the Revolutionary Army, and not by troops of the line.[1] This we think highly probable. Buonaparte has besides affirmed, that far from desiring to sharpen the vengeance of the Jacobins, or act as their agent, he hazarded the displeasure of those whose frown was death, by interposing his protection to save the unfortunate family of Chabrillan, emigrants and aristocrats, who, being thrown by a storm on the coast of France, shortly after the siege of Toulon, became liable to punishment by the guillotine, but whom he saved by procuring them the means of escape by sea.[2]

In the meanwhile the young general of artillery was rapidly rising in reputation. The praises which were suppressed by the representatives of the

[1] [Montholon, t. iii. p. 13; Jomini, t. iv. p. 226.; Las Casas, v. i. p. 153.]

[2] [Las Casas, v. i. p. 152.]

people, were willingly conferred and promulgated by the frank old veteran, Dugommier. Buonaparte's name was placed on the list of those whom he recommended for promotion, with the pointed addition, that if neglected, he would be sure to force his own way.[1] He was accordingly confirmed in his provisional situation of chief of battalion, and appointed [March] to hold that rank in the army of Italy. Before joining that army, the genius of Napoleon was employed by the Convention in surveying and fortifying the sea-coast of the Mediterranean; a very troublesome task, as it involved many disputes with the local authorities of small towns and villages, and even hamlets, all of whom wished to have batteries erected for their own special protection, without regard to the general safety. It involved him, moreover, as we shall presently see, in some risk with the Convention at home.

The chief of battalion discharged his task scientifically. He divided the necessary fortifications into three classes, distinguishing those designed to protect harbours and roadsteads, from such as were intended to defend anchorages of less consequence, and both from the third class, which were to be

[1] ["Dugommier wrote to the Committee of Public Safety, soliciting the rank of brigadier-general for him, and concluded with these words, 'Reward this young man, and promote him, for should he be ungratefully treated, he will promote himself.'"—NAPOLEON, *Montholon*, t. iii. p. 15.

Dugommier was killed on the following November, by the bursting of a field-piece. Napoleon bequeathed to his descendant 100,000 francs, "as a testimonial of gratitude for the esteem, affection, and friendship of that brave and intrepid general."]

placed on proper situations, to prevent insults and partial descents on the coast by an enemy superior at sea. Napoleon dictated to General Gourgaud[1] hints on this subject, which must be of consequence to the sea-coasts which need such military defences.[2]

Having made his report to the Convention, Buonaparte proceeded to join the headquarters of the French army, then lying at Nice, straitened considerably and hemmed in by the Sardinians and Austrians, who, after some vain attempts of General Brunet[3] to dislodge them, had remained masters of the Col de Tende, and lower passes of the Alps, together with the road leading from Turin to Nice by Saorgio.

Buonaparte had influence enough to recommend with success to the general, Dumerbion,[4] and the representatives of the people, Ricord and Robespierre, a plan for driving the enemy out of this position, forcing them to retreat beyond the higher

[1] [Gourgaud, t. i. p. 30.]

[2] [An Englishman will probably remember the sublime passage in "The Mariners of England:"—

"Britannia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is on the mountain-wave,
Her home is on the deep."]

[3] "[Brunet being unjustly accused of favouring the insurrection at Marseilles, was delivered up to the Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris, and perished on the scaffold."—NAPOLEON, *Montholon*, t. iii. p. 21.]

[4] "[An old and brave officer. His military knowledge was considerable, but he was confined to his bed by the gout half his time."—NAPOLEON, *Gourgaud*, t. i. p. 42.

"Happily, he allowed himself to be directed entirely by the young Buonaparte."—THIERS, t. vi. p. 288.]

Alps, and taking Saorgio; all which measures succeeded as he had predicted.[1] Saorgio surrendered, [April 29,] with much stores and baggage, and the French army obtained possession of the chain of the higher Alps, which, being tenable by defending few and difficult passes, placed a great part of the army of Italy, (as it was already termed, though only upon the frontier,) at disposal for actual service.[2]

While directing the means of attaining these successes, Buonaparte, at the same time, acquired a complete acquaintance with that Alpine country, in which he was shortly to obtain victories in his own name, not in that of others, who obtained reputation by acting on his suggestions. But, while he was thus employed, he was involved in an accusation before the Convention, which, had his reputation been less for approved patriotism, might have cost him dear.

In his plans for the defence of the Mediterranean, Napoleon had proposed repairing an old state prison at Marseilles, called fort Saint Nicholas, that it might serve as a powder magazine. This plan his successor on the station proceeded to execute, and by doing so, gave umbrage to the patriots, who charged the commandant of artillery then at Marseilles, and superintending the work, with an intention to rebuild this fort, to serve as a

[1] [Gourgaud, t. i. p. 42.]

[2] [Jomini, t. v. p. 204; Thiers, t. vi. p. 283; Montholon, t. iii. p. 30; Botta, t. i. p. 190. General Dumerbion, in his despatch to the government, describing his successes, says, "It is to the talent of General Buonaparte that I am indebted for the skilful plans which have assured our victory."]

Bastile for controlling the good citizens. The officer being summoned to the bar of the Convention, proved that the plan was not his own, but drawn out by Buonaparte. The representatives of the army in Italy, however, not being able to dispense with his services, wrote to the Convention in his behalf, and gave such an account of the origin and purpose of the undertaking, as divested it of all shade of suspicion even in the suspicious eye of the Committee of Public Safety.[1]

In the remainder of the year 1794, there was little service of consequence in the army of Italy, and the 9th and 10th Thermidor (27th and 28th July) of that year, brought the downfall of Robespierre, and threatened unfavourable consequences to Buonaparte, who had been in close communication with the tyrant's brother, and was understood to have participated in the tone of exaggerated patriotism affected by his party. He endeavoured to shelter himself under his ignorance of the real tendency of the proceedings of those who had fallen; an apology which resolves itself into the ordinary excuse, that he found his late friends had not been the persons he took them for. According to this line of defence, he made all haste to disclaim accession to the political schemes of which they were accused. "I am somewhat affected," he wrote to a correspondent,[2] "at the fate of the younger Robespierre; but had he been my brother, I would have poniarded him with my own hand, had I been aware that he was forming schemes of tyranny."

[1] [Gourgaud, t. i. p. 48.]

[2] [General Tilly. See *Nouvelle Biog. de Bruxelles*, 1822.]

Buonaparte's disclamations do not seem at first to have been favourably received. His situation was now precarious; and when those members were restored to the Convention, who had been expelled and proscribed by the Jacobins, it became still more so. The reaction of the moderate party, accompanied by horrible recollections of the past, and fears for the future, began now to be more strongly felt, as their numbers in the Convention acquired strength. Those officers who had attached themselves to the Jacobin party, were the objects of their animosity; and besides, they were desirous to purify the armies as far as possible of those whom they considered as their own enemies, and those of good order; the rather, that the Jacobinical principles still continued to be more favoured in the armies than in the interior. To the causes of this we have before alluded; but it may not be unnecessary to repeat, that the soldiers had experienced all the advantages of the fierce energies of a government which sent them out to conquest, and offered them the means of achieving it; and they had not been witnesses to the atrocities of their tyranny in the interior.

Before the downfall of Robespierre took place, Buonaparte had received regular but secret instructions to examine the fortifications of Genoa. M. Ricord, by whom these instructions had been signed, having now been superseded, and the younger Robespierre guillotined, Albitte, Salicetti, and Laporte, the new superintendents of the army of Italy, were pleased to suspect that Buonaparte had engaged in some plot of betraying Genoa to

the enemy: he was arrested accordingly early in August; but his papers effectually established his innocence, and after the lapse of a fortnight he was released.[1]

In March, 1795, he was sent to Toulon to take the command of the artillery in an expedition destined against Rome; but this scheme was not persevered in. During his visit to Toulon, however, he had the opportunity of saving from the violence of the populace, a party of unfortunate emigrants, including the noble family of Chabrillant, who had been landed from a Spanish prize. His influence with some cannoneers who had served under him during the siege, enabled him to rescue these individuals; and he unhesitatingly did so, though at considerable risk to himself. On his rejoining the troops in the Maritime Alps, near the end of March, he found the army about to be altered in some parts of its organization, and placed under the command of General Kellerman. A recent arrangement had recalled to the service many officers of high rank who had of late been unemployed; and he, as the youngest on the list of generals, could not only not be allowed to retain his command of the artillery in the army of Kellerman, but was removed to the infantry. He repaired therefore to Paris, with the view of soliciting professional employment elsewhere, and especially of remonstrating against his permanent removal from

[1] "In the despatch of Salicetti and Albitte to the Government, dated 24th August, they declare, that there existed no foundation for the charges made against him."—JOMINI, t. vi. p. 114; *Bourrienne et ses Erreurs*, t. i. p. 27.]

the branch of the service in which he had spent so many years. On his way to the capital he visited his mother at Marseilles, and found his brother Joseph respectably married in that city.

On reaching Paris in May, he found his pretensions thwarted by Aubry, the President of the Military Committee, who was disposed to treat with little attention his statement respecting the siege of Toulon, and his two years of successful service in the army of Italy. When, in the heat of discussion, Aubry objected his youth, Buonaparte replied that presence in the field of battle ought to anticipate the claim of years. The president, who had not been much in action, considered his reply as a personal insult; and Napoleon disdaining farther answer, tendered his resignation.[1] It was not, however, accepted; and he still remained in the rank of expectants, but among those whose hopes were entirely dependent upon their merits.[2]

It may be observed that at a subsequent period, Aubry, being amongst those belonging to Pichegru's party who were banished to Cayenne, was excepted from the decree which permitted the return of those unfortunate exiles, and died at Demerara.

[1] [Montholon, t. iii. p. 50; Las Casas, v. i. p. 155; Louis Buonaparte, p. 14.]

[2] [Buonaparte is represented by some writers as having at this period found his situation extremely embarrassing, even as regarded pecuniary means, in the capital of which he was at no distant period to be the ruler. Among others who are said to have assisted him was the celebrated actor Talma; and such may have been the case; but the story of Talma's having been acquainted with Napoleon at the Academy of Brienne, and at that early period predicting the greatness of "*le petit Buonaparte*," has

Mean time, his situation becoming daily more unpleasant, Buonaparte solicited Barras and Fréron, who, as Thermidoriens, had preserved their credit, for occupation in almost any line of his profession, and even negotiated for permission to go into the Turkish service, to train the Mussulmans to the use of artillery. A fanciful imagination may pursue him to the rank of pacha, or higher; for, go where he would, he could not have remained in mediocrity. His own ideas had a similar tendency. "How strange," he said, "it would be, if a little Corsican officer of artillery were to become King of Jerusalem!" He was offered a command in La Vendée, which he declined to accept, and was finally named to command a brigade of artillery in Holland. But it was in a land where there still existed so many separate and conflicting factions, as in France, that he was doomed to be raised, amid the struggles of his contending countrymen, and upon their shoulders and over their heads, to the very highest eminence to which fortune can exalt an individual. The times required such talents as his, and the opportunity for exercising them soon arose.

The French nation were in general tired of the National Convention, which successive proscriptions had drained of all the talent, eloquence, and energy it had once possessed; and that Assembly had become hateful and contemptible to all men, by suffering itself to be the passive tool of the Terrorists for two years, when, if they had shown

been expressly contradicted by Louis, the ex-King of Holland, who was at this epoch in Paris along with his brother.]

proper firmness, the revolution of the 9th Thermidor might as well have been achieved at the beginning of that frightful anarchy, as after that long period of unheard-of suffering. The Convention was not greatly improved in point of talent, even by the return of their banished brethren; and, in a word, they had lost the confidence of the public entirely. They therefore prepared to gratify the general wish by dissolving themselves.

But before they resigned their ostensible authority, it was necessary to prepare some mode of carrying on the government in future.

The Jacobin constitution of 1793 still existed on paper; but although there was an unrepealed law, menacing with death any one who should propose to alter that form of government, no one appeared disposed to consider it as actually in exercise; and, notwithstanding the solemnity with which it had been received and ratified by the sanction of the national voice, it was actually passed over and abrogated as a matter of course, by a tacit but unanimous consent. Neither was there any disposition to adopt the Girondist constitution of 1791, or to revert to the democratic monarchy of 1792, the only one of these models which could be said to have had even the dubious endurance of a few months. As at the general change of the world, all former things were to be done away—all was to be made anew

Each of these forms of government had been solemnized by the national oaths and processions customary on such occasions; but the opinion was

now universally entertained, that not one of them was founded on just principles, or contained the power of defending itself against aggression, and protecting the lives and rights of the subject. On the other hand, every one not deeply interested in the late anarchy, and implicated in the horrid course of bloodshed and tyranny which was its very essence, was frightened at the idea of reviving a government, which was a professed continuation of the despotism ever attendant upon a revolution, and which, in all civilized countries, ought to terminate with the extraordinary circumstances by which revolution has been rendered necessary. To have continued the revolutionary government, indeed, longer than this, would have been to have imitated the conduct of an ignorant empiric, who should persist in subjecting a convalescent patient to the same course of exhausting and dangerous medicines, which a regular physician would discontinue as soon as the disease had been brought to a favourable crisis.

It seems to have been in general felt and admitted, that the blending of the executive and legislative power together, as both had been exercised by the existing Convention, opened the road to the most afflicting tyranny; and that to constitute a stable government, the power of executing the laws, and administering the ministerial functions, must be vested in some separate individuals, or number of individuals, who should, indeed, be responsible to the national legislature for the exercise of this power, but neither subject to their direct control, nor enjoying it as emanating immediately

from their body. With these reflections arose others, on the utility of dividing the legislative body itself into two assemblies, one of which might form a check on the other, tending, by some exercise of an intermediate authority, to qualify the rash rapidity of a single chamber, and obstruct the progress of any individual, who might, like Robespierre, obtain a dictatorship in such a body, and become, in doing so, an arbitrary tyrant over the whole authorities of the state. Thus, loath and late, the French began to cast an eye on the British constitution, and the system of checks and balances upon which it is founded, as the best means of uniting the protection of liberty with the preservation of order. Thinking men had come gradually to be aware, that in hopes of getting something better than a system which had been sanctioned by the experience of ages, they had only produced a set of models, which were successively wondered at, applauded, neglected, and broken to pieces, instead of a simple machine, capable, in mechanical phrase, of working well.

Had such a feeling prevailed during the commencement of the Revolution, as was advocated by Mounier and others,[1] France and Europe might have been spared the bloodshed and distress which afflicted them during a period of more than twenty years of war, with all the various evils which accompanied that great convulsion. France had then a king; nobles, out of whom a senate might have been selected; and abundance of able men to have

[1] [See *ante*, vol. viii. p. 120.]

formed a lower house, or house of commons. But the golden opportunity was passed over; and when the architects might, perhaps, have been disposed to execute the new fabric which they meditated, on the plan of a limited monarchy, the materials for the structure were no longer to be found.

The legitimate King of France no doubt existed, but he was an exile in a foreign country; and the race of gentry, from whom a house of peers, or hereditary senate, might have been chiefly selected, were to be found only in foreign service, too much exasperated by their sufferings to admit a rational hope that they would ever make any compromise with those who had forced them from their native land, and confiscated their family property. Saving for these circumstances, and the combinations which arose out of them, it seems very likely, that at the period at which we have now arrived, the tide, which began to set strongly against the Jacobins, might have been adroitly turned in favour of the Bourbons. But, though there was a general feeling of melancholy regret, which naturally arose from comparing the peaceful days of the monarchy with those of the Reign of Terror,—the rule of Louis the XVI. with that of Robespierre,—the memory of former quiet and security with the more recent recollections of blood and plunder,—still it seems to have existed rather in the state of a predisposition to form a royal party, than as the principle of one already existing. Fuel was lying ready to catch the flame of loyalty, but the match had not yet been applied; and to counteract this general tendency, there existed the most formidable obstacles.

In the first place, we have shown already the circumstances by which the French armies were strongly attached to the name of the Republic, in whose cause all their wars had been waged, and all their glory won; by whose expeditious and energetic administration the military profession was benefited, while they neither saw nor felt the misery entailed on the nation at large. But the French soldier had not only fought in favour of democracy, but actively and directly against royalty. As *Vive la Republique* was his war-cry, he was in La Vendée, on the Rhine, and elsewhere, met, encountered, and sometimes defeated and driven back, by those who used the opposite signal-word, *Vive le Roi*. The Royalists were, indeed, the most formidable opponents of the military part of the French nation; and such was the animosity of the latter at this period to the idea of returning to the ancient system, that if a general could have been found capable of playing the part of Monk, he would probably have experienced the fate of La Fayette and Dumouriez.

A second and almost insuperable objection to the restoration of the Bourbons, occurred in the extensive change of property that had taken place. If the exiled family had been recalled, they could not, at this very recent period, but have made stipulations for their devoted followers, and insisted that the estates forfeited in their cause, should have been compensated or restored; and such a resumption would have inferred ruin to all the purchasers of national demesnes, and, in consequence, a general shock to the security of property through the kingdom.

The same argument applied to the Church lands. The Most Christian King could not resume his throne, without restoring the ecclesiastical establishment in part, if not in whole. It was impossible to calculate the mass of persons of property and wealth, with their various connexions, who, as possessors of national demesnes, that is, of the property of the Church, or of the emigrants, were bound by their own interest to oppose the restoration of the Bourbon family. The revolutionary government had followed the coarse, but striking and deeply politic, admonition of the Scottish Reformer —"Pull down the nests," said Knox, when he urged the multitude to destroy churches and abbeys, "and the rooks will fly off." The French government, by dilapidating and disposing of the property of the emigrants and clergy, had established an almost insurmountable barrier against the return of the original owners. The cavaliers in the great Civil War of England had been indeed fined, sequestrated, impoverished; but their estates were still, generally speaking, in their possession; and they retained, though under oppression and poverty, the influence of a national aristocracy, diminished, but not annihilated. In France, that influence of resident proprietors had all been transferred to other hands, tenacious in holding what property they had acquired, and determined to make good the defence of it against those who claimed a prior right.

Lastly, the fears and conscious recollections of those who held the chief power in France for the time, induced them to view their own safety as

deeply compromised by any proposition of restoring the exiled royal family. This present sitting and ruling Convention had put to death Louis XVI.,—with what hope of safety could they install his brother on the throne? They had formally, and in full conclave, renounced belief in the existence of a Deity—with what consistence could they be accessory to restore a national church? Some remained Republicans from their heart and upon conviction; and a great many more of the deputies could not abjure democracy, without confessing at the same time, that all the violent measures which they had carried through for the support of that system, were so many great and treasonable crimes.

These fears of a retributive reaction were very generally felt in the Convention. The Thermidoriens, in particular, who had killed Robespierre, and now reigned in his stead, had more substantial grounds of apprehension from any counter-revolutionary movement, than even the body of the representatives at large, many of whom had been merely passive in scenes where Barras and Tallien had been active agents. The timid party of The Plain might be overawed by the returning prince; and the members of the Girondists, who could indeed scarce be said to exist as a party, might be safely despised. But the Thermidoriens themselves stood in a different predicament. They were of importance enough to attract both detestation and jealousy; they held power, which must be an object of distrust to the restored monarch; and they stood on precarious ground, betwixt the hatred

of the moderate party, who remembered them as colleagues of Robespierre and Danton, and that of the Jacobins, who saw in Tallien and Barras deserters of that party, and the destroyers of the power of the Sans Culottes. They had, therefore, just reason to fear, that, stripped of the power which they at present possessed, they might become the unpitied and unaided scape-goats, to expiate all the offences of the Revolution.

Thus each favourable sentiment towards the cause of the Bourbons was opposed; I. By their unpopularity with the armies; II. By the apprehensions of the confusion and distress which must arise from a general change of property; and III. By the conscious fears of those influential persons, who conceived their own safety concerned in sustaining the republican model.

Still, the idea of monarchy was so generally received as the simplest and best mode of once more re-establishing good order and a fixed government, that some statesmen proposed to resume the form, but change the dynasty. With this view, divers persons were suggested by those, who supposed that by passing over the legitimate heir to the crown, the dangers annexed to his rights and claims might be avoided, and the apprehended measures of resumption and reaction might be guarded against. The son of the Duke of Orleans was named, but the infamy of his father clung to him. In another wild hypothesis the Duke of York, or the Duke of Brunswick, were suggested as fit to be named constitutional Kings of France. The Abbé Siêyes is said to have

expressed himself in favour of the prince last named.[1]

But without regarding the wishes or opinions of the people without doors, the Convention resolved to establish such a model of government as should be most likely to infuse into a republic something of the stability of a monarchial establishment; and thus repair at once former errors, and preserve an appearance of consistency in the eyes of Europe.

For this purpose eleven commissioners, chiefly selected amongst the former Girondists, were appointed [April] to draw up a new Constitution upon a new principle, which was again to receive the universal adhesion of the French by acclamation and oath, and to fall, in a short time, under the same neglect which had attended every preceding model. This, it was understood, was to be so constructed, as to unite the consistency of a monarchical government with the name and forms of a democracy.

That the system now adopted by the French commissioners might bear a form corresponding to the destinies of the nation, and flattering to its vanity, it was borrowed from that of the Roman republic, an attempt to imitate which had already introduced many of the blunders and many of the crimes of the Revolution. The executive power was lodged in a council of five persons, termed

[1] The Memoirs published under the name of Fouché make this assertion. But although that work shows great intimacy with the secret history of the times, it is not to be implicitly relied upon.

Directors, to whom were to be consigned the conduct of peace and war, the execution of the laws, and the general administration of the government. They were permitted no share of the legislative authority.

This arrangement was adopted to comply with the jealousy of those, who, in the individual person of a single Director, holding a situation similar to that of the Stadtholder in Holland, or the President of the United States, saw something too closely approaching to a monarchical government. Indeed, it is said, Louvet warned them against establishing such an office, by assuring them, that when they referred the choice of the individual who was to hold it, to the nation at large, they would see the Bourbon heir elected.[1] But the inconvenience of this pentarchy could not be disguised; and it seemed to follow as a necessary consequence of such a numerous executive council, either that there would be a schism, and a minority and majority established in that preeminent body of the state, where unity and vigour were chiefly requisite, or else that some one or two of the ablest and most crafty among the directors would establish a supremacy over the others, and use them less as their colleagues than their dependents. The legislators, however, though they knew that the whole Roman empire was found insufficient to satiate the ambition of three men, yet appeared to hope that the concord and unanimity of their five directors might continue unbroken, though they

[1] ["Peut-être un jour, on vous nommerait un Bourbon."—THIERS, t. viii. p. 10.]

had but one nation to govern; and they decided accordingly.

The executive power being thus provided for, the legislative body was to consist of two councils; one of Elders, as it was called, serving as a House of Lords; another of Youngers, which they termed, from its number, the Council of Five Hundred. Both were elective, and the difference of age was the only circumstance which placed a distinction betwixt the two bodies. The members of the Council of Five Hundred were to be at least twenty-five years old, a qualification which, after the seventh year of the Republic, was to rise to thirty years complete. In this assembly laws were to be first proposed; and, having received its approbation, they were to be referred to the Council of Ancients. The requisites to sit in the latter senate, were the age of forty years complete, and the being a married man or a widower. Bachelors, though above that age, were deemed unfit for legislation, perhaps from want of domestic experience.

The Council of Ancients had the power of rejecting the propositions laid before them by the Council of Five Hundred, or, by adopting and approving them, that of passing them into laws. These regulations certainly gained one great point, in submitting each proposed legislative enactment to two separate bodies, and of course, to mature and deliberate consideration. It is true, that neither of the councils had any especial character, or separate interest which could enable or induce the Ancients, as a body, to suggest to the Five Hundred a

different principle of considering any proposed measure, from that which was likely to occur to them in their own previous deliberation. No such varied views, therefore, were to be expected, as must arise between assemblies composed of persons who differ in rank or fortune, and consequently view the same question in various and opposite lights. Still, delay and reconsideration were attained, before the irrevocable fiat was imposed upon any measure of consequence; and so far much was gained. An orator was supposed to answer all objections to the system of the two councils thus constituted, when he described that of the Juniors as being the imagination, that of the Ancients as being the judgment of the nation; the one designed to invent and suggest national measures, the other to deliberate and decide upon them. This was, though liable to many objections, an ingenious illustration indeed; but an illustration is not an argument, though often passing current as such.

On the whole, the form of the Constitution[1] of the year Three, *i. e.* 1795, showed a greater degree of practical efficacy, sense, and consistency, than any of those previously suggested; and in the introduction, though there was the usual proclamation of the rights of man, his duties to the laws and to the social system were for the first time enumerated in manly and forcible language, intimating the desire of the framers of these institutions to

[1] ["Its authors were Lesage, Daunou, Boissy d'Anglas, Creuzée-Latouche, Berlier, Louvet, Lareveillère-Lepaux, Languinais, Durand-Maillanne, Baudin des Ardennes, and Thibaudeau."—THIERS, t. viii. p. 9.]

put a stop to the continuation of revolutionary violence in future.

But the constitution, now promulgated, had a blemish common to all its predecessors; it was totally new, and unsanctioned by the experience either of France or any other country; a mere experiment in politics, the result of which could not be known until it had been put in exercise, and which, for many years at least, must be necessarily less the object of respect than of criticism. Wise legislators, even when lapse of time, alteration of manners, or increased liberality of sentiment, require corresponding alterations in the institutions of their fathers, are careful, as far as possible, to preserve the ancient form and character of those laws, into which they are endeavouring to infuse principles and a spirit accommodated to the altered exigencies and temper of the age. There is an enthusiasm in patriotism as well as in religion. We value institutions, not only because they are ours, but because they have been those of our fathers; and if a new constitution were to be presented to us, although perhaps theoretically showing more symmetry than that by which the nation had been long governed, it would be as difficult to transfer to it the allegiance of the people, as it would be to substitute the worship of a Madonna, the work of modern art, for the devotion paid by the natives of Saragossa to their ancient Palladium, Our Lady of the Pillar.

But the constitution of the year Three, with all its defects, would have been willingly received by the nation in general, as affording some security

from the revolutionary storm, had it not been for a selfish and usurping device of the Thermidoriens to mutilate and render it nugatory at the very outset, by engrafting upon it the means of continuing the exercise of their own arbitrary authority. It must never be forgotten, that these conquerors of Robespierre had shared all the excesses of his party before they became his personal enemies; and that when deprived of their official situations and influence, which they were likely to be by a representative body freely and fairly elected, they were certain to be exposed to great individual danger.

Determined, therefore, to retain the power in their own hands, the Thermidoriens suffered, with an indifference amounting almost to contempt, the constitution to pass through, and be approved of by, the Convention. But, under pretence that it would be highly impolitic to deprive the nation of the services of men accustomed to public business, they procured [Aug. 22] two decrees to be passed; the first ordaining the electoral bodies of France to choose, as representatives to the two councils under the new constitution, at least two-thirds of the members presently sitting in Convention; and the second declaring, that in default of a return of two-thirds of the present deputies, as prescribed, the Convention themselves should fill up the vacancies out of their own body; in other words, should name a large proportion of themselves their own successors in legislative power.[1]

These decrees were sent down to the Primary

[1] [Thiers, t. viii. p. 13.]

Assemblies of the people, and every art was used to render them acceptable.

But the nation, and particularly the city of Paris, generally revolted at this stretch of arbitrary authority. They recollected, that all the members who had sat in the first National Assembly, so remarkable for talent, had been declared ineligible, on that single account, for the second legislative body; and now, men so infinitely the inferiors of those who were the colleagues of Mirabeau, Mounier, and other great names, presumed not only to declare themselves eligible by re-election, but dared to establish two-thirds of their number as indispensable ingredients of the legislative assemblies, which, according to the words alike and spirit of the constitution, ought to be chosen by the free voice of the people. The electors, and particularly those of the sections of Paris, angrily demanded to know, upon what public services the deputies of the Convention founded their title to a privilege so unjust and anomalous. Among the more active part of them, to whom the measure was chiefly to be ascribed, they saw but a few reformed Terrorists, who wished to retain the power of tyranny, though disposed to exercise it with some degree of moderation, and the loss of whose places might be possibly followed by that of their heads; in the others, they only beheld a flock of timid and discountenanced Helots, willing to purchase personal security at the sacrifice of personal honour and duty to the public; while in the Convention as a body, who pronounced so large a proportion of their number as indispensable to

the service of the state, judging from their conduct hitherto, they could but discover an image composed partly of iron, partly of clay, deluged with the blood of many thousand victims—a pageant without a will of its own, and which had been capable of giving its countenance to the worst of actions, at the instigation of the worst of men—a sort of Moloch, whose name had been used by its priests to compel the most barbarous sacrifices. To sum up the whole, these experienced men of public business, without whose intermediation it was pretended the national affairs could not be carried on, could only shelter themselves from the charge of unbounded wickedness, by pleading their unlimited cowardice, and by poorly alleging that for two years they had sat, voted, and deliberated under a system of compulsion and terror. So much meanness rendered those who were degraded by it unfit, not merely to rule, but to live; and yet two-thirds of their number were, according to their own decrees, to be intruded on the nation as an indispensable portion of its representatives.

Such was the language held in the assemblies of the sections of Paris, who were the more irritated against the domineering and engrossing spirit exhibited in these usurping enactments, because it was impossible to forget that it was their interference, and the protection afforded by their national guard, which had saved the Convention from massacre on more occasions than one.

In the meanwhile reports continued to be made from the Primary Assemblies, of their adhesion to

the constitution, in which they were almost unanimous, and of their sentiments concerning the two decrees, authorizing and commanding the re-election of two-thirds of the Convention, on which there existed a strong difference of opinion. The Convention, determined, at all rates, to carry through with a high hand the iniquitous and arbitrary measure which they proposed, failed not to make these reports such as they desired them to be, and announced that the two decrees had been accepted by a majority of the Primary Assemblies. The citizens of Paris challenged the accuracy of the returns—alleged that the reports were falsified—demanded a scrutiny, and openly bid defiance to the Convention. Their power of meeting together in their sections, on account of the appeal to the people, gave them an opportunity of feeling their own strength, and encouraging each other by speeches and applauses. They were farther emboldened and animated by men of literary talent, whose power was restored with the liberty of the press.[1] Finally, they declared their sittings permanent, and that they had the right to protect the liberties of France. The greater part of the national guards were united on this occasion against the existing government; and nothing less was talked of, than that they should avail themselves of their arms and numbers, march down to the Tuile-

[1] [" La Harpe, Lacretelle, jun., Suard, Morellet, Vaublanc, Pastoret, Dupont de Nemours, Quatremère de Quincy, Delalot, Marchenna, and General Miranda, all either published pamphlets or made speeches in the sections."—THIERS, t. viii. p. 15.]

ries, and dictate law to the Convention with their muskets, as the revolutionary mob of the suburbs used to do with their pikes.

The Convention, unpopular themselves, and embarked in an unpopular cause, began to look anxiously around for assistance. They chiefly relied on the aid of about five thousand regular troops, who were assembled in and around Paris. These declared for government with the greater readiness, that the insurrection was of a character decidedly aristocratical, and that the French armies, as already repeatedly noticed, were attached to the Republic. But besides, these professional troops entertained the usual degree of contempt for the national guards, and on this account alone were quite ready to correct the insolence of the *pekins*,[1] or *muscadins*,[2] who usurped the dress and character of soldiers. The Convention had also the assistance of several hundred artillerymen, who, since the taking of the Bastile, had been always zealous democrats. Still apprehensive of the result, they added to this force another of a more ominous description. It was a body of volunteers, consisting of about fifteen hundred men, whom they chose to denominate the Sacred Band, or the Patriots of 1789. They were gleaned out of the suburbs, and from the jails, the remnants of the insurrectional battalions which had formed the body-guard of Hébert and Robespierre,

[1] *Pekins*, a word of contempt, by which the soldiers distinguished those who did not belong to their profession.

[2] *Muscadins*, fops—a phrase applied to the better class of *Sans Culottes*.

and had been the instruments by which they executed their atrocities. The Convention proclaimed them men of the 10th of August—undoubtedly, they were also men of the massacres of September. It was conceived that the beholding such a pack of bloodhounds, ready to be let loose, might inspire horror into the citizens of Paris, to whom their very aspect brought so many fearful recollections. It did so, but it also inspired hatred; and the number and zeal of the citizens, compensating for the fury of the Terrorists, and for the superior discipline of the regular troops to be employed against them, promised an arduous and doubtful conflict.

Much, it was obvious, must depend on the courage and conduct of the leaders.

The sections employed, as their commander-in-chief, General Danican, an old officer of no high reputation for military skill, but otherwise a worthy and sincere man. The Convention at first made choice of Menou, and directed him, supported by a strong military force, to march into the section Le Pelletier, and disarm the national guards of that district. This section is one of the most wealthy, and of course most aristocratic, in Paris, being inhabited by bankers, merchants, the wealthiest class of tradesmen, and the better orders in general. Its inhabitants had formerly composed the battalion of national guards des Filles Saint Thomas, the only one which, taking part in the defence of the Tuileries, shared the fate of the Swiss Guards upon the memorable 10th of August. The section continued to entertain sentiments of

the same character, and when Menou appeared at the head of his forces, accompanied by La Porte, a member of the Convention, he found the citizens under arms, and exhibiting such a show of resistance, as induced him, after a parley, to retreat without venturing an attack upon them.

Menou's indecision showed that he was not a man suited to the times, and he was suspended from his command by the Convention, and placed under arrest. The general management of affairs, and the direction of the Conventional forces, was then committed to Barras; but the utmost anxiety prevailed among the members of the committees by whom government was administered, to find a general of nerve and decision enough to act under Barras, in the actual command of the military force, in a service so delicate, and times so menacing. It was then that a few words from Barras, addressed to his colleagues, Carnot and Tallien, decided the fate of Europe for wellnigh twenty years, "I have the man," he said, "whom you want, a little Corsican officer, who will not stand upon ceremony."[1]

The acquaintance of Barras and Buonaparte had been, as we have already said, formed at the siege of Toulon, and the former had not forgotten the inventive and decisive genius of the young officer to whom the conquest of that city was to be ascribed.

[1] ["For several months, Napoleon, not being actively employed, laboured in the military committee, and was well acquainted with Carnot and Tallien, whom he saw daily. How, then, could Barras make them the proposal attributed to him?"—Louis Buonaparte, p. 17.]

On the recommendation of Barras, Buonaparte was sent for. He had witnessed the retreat of Menou, and explained with much simplicity the causes of that check, and the modes of resistance which ought to be adopted in case of the apprehended attack. His explanations gave satisfaction. Buonaparte was placed at the head of the Conventional forces, and took all the necessary precautions to defend the same palace which he had seen attacked and carried by a body of insurgents on the 10th of August. But he possessed far more formidable means of defence than were in the power of the unfortunate Louis. He had two hundred pieces of cannon, which his high military skill enabled him to distribute to the utmost advantage. He had more than five thousand regular forces, and about fifteen hundred volunteers. He was thus enabled to defend the whole circuit of the Tuileries; to establish posts in all the avenues by which it could be approached; to possess himself of the bridges, so as to prevent cooperation between the sections which lay on the opposite banks of the river; and finally, to establish a strong reserve in the Place Louis Quinze, or, as it was then called, Place de la Révolution. Buonaparte had only a few hours to make all these arrangements, for he was named in place of Menou late on the night before the conflict.

A merely civic army, having no cannon, (for the field-pieces, of which each section possessed two, had been almost all given up to the Convention after the disarming the suburb of Saint Antoine,) ought to have respected so strong a position as the

Tuileries, when so formidably defended. Their policy should have been, as in the days of Henry II., to have barricaded the streets at every point, and cooped up the Conventional troops within the defensive position they had assumed, till want of provisions obliged them to sally at disadvantage, or to surrender. But a popular force is generally impatient of delay. The retreat of Menou had given them spirit, and they apprehended, with some show of reason, that the sections, if they did not unite their forces, might be attacked and disarmed separately. They therefore resolved to invest the Convention in a hostile manner, require of the members to recall the obnoxious decrees, and allow the nation to make a free and undictated election of its representatives.

On the thirteenth Vendemaire, corresponding to the 4th October, the civil affray, commonly called the Day of the Sections, took place. The national guards assembled, to the number of thirty thousand men and upwards, but having no artillery. They advanced by different avenues, in close columns, but every where found the most formidable resistance. One large force occupied the quays on the left bank of the Seine, threatening the palace from that side of the river. Another strong division advanced on the Tuileries, through the Rue St Honoré, designing to debouche on the palace, where the Convention was sitting, by the Rue de l'Echelle. They did so, without duly reflecting that they were flanked on most points by strong posts in the lanes and crossings, defended by artillery.

The contest began in the Rue St Honoré. Buonaparte had established a strong post with two guns at the cul-de-sac Dauphine, opposite to the church of St Roche. He permitted the imprudent Parisians to involve their long and dense columns in the narrow street without interruption, until they established a body of grenadiers in the front of the church, and opposite to the position at the cul-de-sac. Each party, as usual, throws on the other the blame of commencing the civil contest for which both were prepared. But all agree the firing commenced with musketry. It was instantly followed by discharges of grape-shot and cannister, which, pointed as the guns were, upon thick columns of the national guards, arranged on the quays and in the narrow streets, made an astounding carnage. The national guards offered a brave resistance, and even attempted to rush on the artillery, and carry the guns by main force. But a measure which is desperate enough in the open field, becomes impossible when the road to assault lies through narrow streets, which are swept by the cannon at every discharge. The citizens were compelled to give way. By a more judicious arrangement of their respective forces, different results might have been hoped; but how could Danican, in any circumstances, have competed with Buonaparte? The affair, in which several hundred men were killed and wounded, was terminated as a general action in about an hour; and the victorious troops of the Convention, marching into the different sections, completed the dispersion and disarming of their

opponents, an operation which lasted till late at night.

The Convention used this victory with the moderation which recollection of the Reign of Terror had inspired. Only two persons suffered death for the Day of the Sections. One of them, La Fond, had been a garde de corps, was distinguished for his intrepidity, and repeatedly rallied the national guard under the storm of grape-shot. Several other persons having fled, were in their absence capitally condemned, but were not strictly looked after; and deportation was the punishment inflicted upon others. The accused were indebted for this clemency chiefly to the interference of those members of the Convention, who, themselves exiled on the 31st of May, had suffered persecution and learned mercy.

The Convention showed themselves at the same time liberal to their protectors. General Berruyer,[1] who commanded the volunteers of 1789, and other general officers employed on the Day of the Sections, were loaded with praises and preferment. But a separate triumph was destined to Buonaparte, as the hero of the day. Five days after the battle, Barras solicited the attention of the Convention to the young officer, by whose prompt and skilful dispositions the Tuileries had been protected on the 13th Vendemaire, and proposed that they should approve of General Buonaparte's appointment as second in command of the army of

[1] [In 1796, the Directory appointed Berruyer commander of the Hôpital des Invalides, which situation he held till his death, in 1804.]

the interior, Barras himself still remaining commander-in-chief. The proposal was adopted by acclamation. The Convention retained their resentment against Menou, whom they suspected of treachery; but Buonaparte interfering as a mediator, they were content to look over his offence.

After this decided triumph over their opponents, the Convention ostensibly laid down their authority, and retiring from the scene in their present character, appeared upon it anew in that of a Primary Assembly, in order to make choice of such of their members as, by virtue of the decrees of two-thirds, as they were called, were to remain on the stage, as members of the Legislative Councils of Elders and Five Hundred.

After this change of names and dresses, resembling the shifts of a strolling company of players, the two-thirds of the old Convention, with one-third of members newly elected, took upon them the administration of the new constitution. The two re-elected thirds formed a large proportion of the councils, and were, in some respects, much like those unfortunate women, who, gathered from jails and from the streets of the metropolis, have been sometimes sent out to foreign settlements; and, however profligate their former lives may have been, often regain character, and become tolerable members of society, in a change of scene and situation.

The Directory consisted of Barras, Siêyes, Reubel, Latourneur de la Manche, and Reveillière-Lepaux, to the exclusion of Tallien, who was deeply offended. Four of these directors were reformed

Jacobins, or Thermidoriens; the fifth, Reveillière-Lepaux, was esteemed a Girondist. Siêyes, whose taste was rather for speculating in politics than acting in them, declined what he considered a hazardous office, and was replaced by Carnot.

The nature of the insurrection of the Sections was not ostensibly royalist, but several of its leaders were of that party in secret, and, if successful, it would most certainly have assumed that complexion. Thus, the first step of Napoleon's rise commenced by the destruction of the hopes of the House of Bourbon, under the reviving influence of which, twenty years afterwards, he himself was obliged to succumb. But the long path which closed so darkly, was now opening upon him in light and joy. Buonaparte's high services, and the rank which he had obtained, rendered him now a young man of the first hope and expectation, mingling on terms of consideration among the rulers of the state, instead of being regarded as a neglected stranger, supporting himself with difficulty, and haunting public offices and bureax in vain, to obtain some chance of preferment, or even employment.

From second in command, the new general soon became general-in-chief of the army of the interior, Barras having found his duties as a director incompatible with those of military command. He employed his genius, equally prompt and profound, in improving the state of the military forces; and, in order to prevent the recurrence of such insurrections as that of the 13th Vendemaire, or Day of the Sections, and as the many others by which it

was preceded, he appointed and organized a guard for the protection of the representative body.

As the dearth of bread, and other causes of disaffection, continued to produce commotions in Paris, the general of the interior was sometimes obliged to oppose them with a military force. On one occasion, it is said, that when Buonaparte was anxiously admonishing the multitude to disperse, a very bulky woman exhorted them to keep their ground. "Never mind these coxcombs with the epaulets," she said; "they do not care if we are all starved, so they themselves feed and get fat."— "Look at me, good woman," said Buonaparte, who was then as thin as a shadow, "and tell me which is the fatter of us two." This turned the laugh against the Amazon, and the rabble dispersed in good-humour.[1] If not among the most distinguished of Napoleon's victories, this is certainly worthy of record, as achieved at the least cost.

Mean time circumstances, which we will relate, according to his own statement, introduced Buonaparte to an acquaintance, which was destined to have much influence on his future fate. A fine boy of ten or twelve years old, presented himself at the levee of the general of the interior, with a request of a nature unusually interesting. He stated his name to be Eugene Beauharnais, son of the ci-devant Vicomte de Beauharnais, who, adhering to the revolutionary party, had been a general in the Republican service upon the Rhine,

[1] [Las Casas, t. i. p. 161.]

and falling under the causeless suspicion of the Committee of Public Safety, was delivered to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and fell by its sentence just four days before the overthrow of Robespierre. Eugene was come to request of Buonaparte, as general of the interior, that his father's sword might be restored to him. The prayer of the young supplicant was as interesting as his manners were engaging, and Napoleon felt so much interest in him, that he was induced to cultivate the acquaintance of Eugene's mother, afterwards the Empress Josephine.[1]

This lady was a Creolian, the daughter of a planter in St Domingo. Her name at full length was Marie-Joseph Rose Detacher de la Pagérie. She had suffered her share of revolutionary miseries. After her husband, General Beauharnais, had been deprived of his command, she was arrested as a suspected person, and detained in prison till the general liberation, which succeeded the revolution of 9th Thermidor. While in confinement, Madame Beauharnais had formed an intimacy with a companion in distress, Madame Fontenai, now Madame Tallien,[2] from which she derived great advantages after her friend's marriage. With a remarkably graceful person, amiable manners, and an inexhaustible fund of good-humour, Madame Beauharnais was formed to be an ornament to society. Barras, the Thermidorien hero, himself an ex-noble, was fond of society, desirous of enjoying it on an agreeable scale, and of washing away the

[1] [Montholon, t. iii. p. 82.]
[2] [See *ante*, p. 279.]

dregs which Jacobinism had mingled with all the dearest interests of life. He loved show, too, and pleasure, and might now indulge both without the risk of falling under the suspicion of incivism, which, in the Reign of Terror, would have been incurred by any attempt to intermingle elegance with the enjoyments of social intercourse. At the apartments which he occupied, as one of the directory, in the Luxemburg palace, he gave its free course to his natural taste, and assembled an agreeable society of both sexes. Madame Tallien and her friend formed the soul of these assemblies, and it was supposed that Barras was not insensible to the charms of Madame Beauharnais,—a rumour which was likely to arise, whether with or without foundation.

When Madame Beauharnais and General Buonaparte became intimate, the latter assures us, and we see no reason to doubt him, that although the lady was two or three years older than himself,[1] yet being still in the full bloom of beauty, and extremely agreeable in her manners, he was induced solely by her personal charms, to make her an offer of his hand, heart, and fortunes,—little supposing, of course, to what a pitch the latter were to arise.

Although he himself is said to have been a fatalist, believing in destiny and in the influence of his star, he knew nothing, probably, of the prediction of a negro sorceress, who, while Marie-Joseph was but a child, prophesied she should rise to a dignity greater than that of a queen, yet fall from it before

[1] Buonaparte was then in his twenty-sixth year. Josephine gave herself in the marriage contract for twenty-eight.

her death.[1] This was one of those vague auguries, delivered at random by fools or impostors, which the caprice of Fortune sometimes matches with a corresponding and conforming event. But without trusting to the African sibyl's prediction, Buonaparte may have formed his match under the auspices of ambition as well as love. The marrying Madame Beauharnais was a mean of uniting his fortune with those of Barras and Tallien, the first of whom governed France as one of the directors; and the last, from talents and political connexions, had scarcely inferior influence. He had already deserved well of them for his conduct on the Day of the Sections, but he required their countenance to rise still higher; and without derogating from the bride's merits, we may suppose her influence in their society corresponded with the views of her lover. It is, however, certain, that he always regarded her with peculiar affection; that he relied on her fate, which he considered as linked with and strengthening his own; and reposed, besides, considerable confidence in Josephine's tact and address in political business. She had at all times the art of mitigating his temper, and turning aside the

[1] A lady of high rank, who happened to live for some time in the same convent at Paris, where Josephine was also a pensioner or boarder, heard her mention the prophecy, and told it herself to the author, just about the time of the Italian expedition, when Buonaparte was beginning to attract notice. Another clause is usually added to the prediction—that the party whom it concerned should die in an hospital, which was afterwards explained as referring to Malmaison. This the author did not hear from the same authority. The lady mentioned used to speak in the highest terms of the simple manners and great kindness of Madame Beauharnais.

hasty determinations of his angry moments, not by directly opposing, but by gradually parrying and disarming them. It must be added, to her great praise, that she was always a willing, and often a successful advocate, in the cause of humanity.

They were married 9th March 1796; and the dowery of the bride was the chief command of the Italian armies, a scene which opened a full career to the ambition of the youthful general. Buonaparte remained with his wife only three days after his marriage, hastened to see his family, who were still at Marseilles, and, having enjoyed the pleasure of exhibiting himself as a favourite of Fortune in the city which he had lately left in a very subordinate capacity, proceeded rapidly to commence the career to which Fate called him, by placing himself at the head of the Italian army.[1]

[1] ["It was I who proposed Buonaparte for the command of the army of Italy, not Barras."—CARNOT, *Réponse à Bailleul.*

"Napoleon owed the appointment to the command of the army of Italy to his signal services under Dumerbion."—JOMINI, t. viii. p. 49.]

APPENDIX.

No. I.

BUONAPARTE'S LETTER TO GENERAL PAOLI.

[See p. 333.]

GENERAL,

I was born when our country was perishing. Thirty thousand Frenchmen, vomited on our coasts, drowning the throne of liberty in streams of blood—such was the odious spectacle which first presented itself to my sight.

The cries of the dying, the groans of the oppressed, the tears of despair, were the companions of my infancy.

You quitted our island, and with you disappeared the hope of happiness. Slavery was the reward of our submission; weighed down under the triple chain of the soldier, the legislator, and the collector of imposts, our countrymen live despised—despised by those who have the forces of the administration in their hands. Is not this the severest of suffering for those who have the slightest elevation of sentiment? Can the wretched Peruvian, groaning under the tortures of the rapacious Spaniard, experience a vexation more galling?

The traitors to our country—the wretches whom the thirst of sordid gain has corrupted—to justify themselves, have circulated calumnies against the national government, and against you in particular. Writers, adopting them as truths, transmit them to posterity.

While reading them, my blood has boiled with indignation; and at length I have resolved to disperse these delusions, the

offspring of ignorance. An early study of the French language, long observation, and documents drawn from the portfolios of the patriots, have led me to promise myself some success.

I wish to compare your government of our country with the present one. I wish to brand with infamy the men who have betrayed the common cause. I wish to summon before the tribunal of public opinion the men now in power—to set forth their vexatious proceedings, expose their secret intrigues, and, if possible, interest the present minister [1] in the deplorable situation we are now in.

If my fortune had permitted me to live in the capital, I should doubtless have found out other means of making known the wrongs of my country: but, obliged to serve in the army, I find myself compelled to resort to this, the only means of publicity; for, as to private memorials, they would either not reach those for whom they were intended, or, stifled by the clamour of interested individuals, they would only occasion the ruin of the author.

Still young, my undertaking may be a rash one; but a love of truth, my native land, and fellow-countrymen—that enthusiasm, with which the prospect of an amelioration in our state always inspires me, will be my support. If you, general, condescend to approve of a labour, of which your deeds will form so large a portion—if you condescend to encourage the efforts of a young man, whom you have known from the hour of his birth, and whose parents were always attached to the good cause, I shall dare to augur favourably of my success.

I at one time indulged a hope, that I should have been able to go to London, to express to you in person the sentiments you have given birth to in my bosom, and to converse together on the misfortunes of our country; but the distance is an obstacle. The day, perhaps, will arrive, when I shall be able to overcome it.

Whatever may be the success of my work, I am sensible that it will raise against me the whole host of French *employés*, who misgovern our island, and against whom my attack is directed. But what imports their enmity, when the interest of our country is at stake! I shall be loaded with their abuse; and, when the bolt falls, I shall descend into my own bosom, call to memory the legitimacy of my motives, and from that moment defy it.

Permit me, general, to offer you the homage of my family.

[1] [M. Necker.]

And, ah! why should I not say, of my countrymen? They sigh at the recollection of a time when they had hoped for liberty. My mother, Madame Letitia, charges me especially to recall to your memory the years long since passed at Corté.

I am, with respect,
General,
Your very humble, and very obedient Servant,
NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE,
Officer in the Regiment of La Fère.

AUXONNE-EN-BOURGOYNE,
12*th June*, 1789.

No. II.

LETTER OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE TO M. MATTEO BUTTAFUOCO, DEPUTY FROM CORSICA TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

[See p. 334.]

SIR,

From Bonifacio to Cape Corso, from Ajaccio to Bastia, there is one chorus of imprecations against you. Your friends keep out of sight, your relations disown you, and even the man of reflection, who does not allow himself to be swayed by popular opinion, is, for once, led away by the general effervescence.

But what have you done? What are the crimes to justify such universal indignation, such complete desertion? This, sir, is what I wish to enquire into, in the course of a little discussion with you.

The history of your life, since the time at least when you appeared on the stage of public affairs, is well known. Its principal features are drawn in letters of blood. Still, however, there are details comparatively unknown. In these I may be mistaken; but I reckon upon your indulgence, and hope for information from you.

After having entered the service of France, you returned to see your relations; you found the tyrants vanquished, the national government established, and the Corsicans, entirely governed by noble sentiments, vying with each other in daily

sacrifices for the prosperity of the state. You did not allow yourself to be seduced by the general enthusiasm; far from that, you looked with nothing but pity on the nonsensical stuff about country, liberty, independence, and constitution, which had got into the heads of our meanest peasants. Deep reflection had taught you to set a proper value on those artificial sentiments, the maintenance of which is a general evil. In fact, the peasant must be taught to mind his work, and not play the hero, if it is wished that he should not starve, that he should bring up his family, and pay respect to authority. As to those who are called, by their rank and fortune, to occupy stations of power, they cannot long remain such dupes as to sacrifice their comforts and consideration in society for a mere chimera, or stoop to pay court to a cobbler, that they may at last play the part of Brutus. Still, as it was necessary for your designs that you should gain the favour of Paoli, you had to dissemble;—M. Paoli being the centre of all the movements of the political body. We shall admit that he had talent—even a certain degree of genius; he had, in a short time, placed the affairs of the island on a good footing; he had founded a university, in which, for the first time, perhaps, since the creation, the sciences which are useful for the developement of reason were taught among our mountains. He had established a foundery for cannon, powder-mills, and fortifications, which increased the means of defence; he had formed harbours, which, while they encouraged commerce, improved agriculture; he had created a navy, which protected our communication with other countries, while it injured our enemies. All these establishments, in their infancy, were a mere presage of what he one day might have done. Union, peace, and liberty, seemed the precursors of national prosperity, had not a government, ill organized, and placed on an unsound basis, afforded still surer indications of the misfortunes which were to happen, and of the total ruin into which every thing was to fall.

M. Paoli had dreamed of being a Solon, but had been unsuccessful in his imitation. He had placed every thing in the hands of the people or their representatives, so that it was impossible even to exist without pleasing them. A strange error! which places under the control of a brutal and mercenary plebeian, the man who alone, by his education, his illustrious birth, and his fortune, is formed for governing. In the long run, so palpable a dereliction of reason cannot fail to bring on the ruin and dissolution of the body-politic, after having exposed it to every species of suffering.

You succeeded to your wish. M. Paoli, constantly surrounded by enthusiastic and hot-headed persons, never imagined that there could be any other passion than the devotion to liberty and independence. Finding that you had some knowledge of France, he did not trouble himself to do more than take your own word for your moral principles. He got you appointed to treat at Versailles respecting the accommodation which was negotiating under the mediation of the cabinet. M. de Choiseul saw you, and knew you; minds of a certain stamp are speedily appreciated. In a short time, in place of being the representative of a free people, you transformed yourself into the clerk of a minister; you communicated to him the instructions, the plans, the secrets of the Cabinet of Corsica.

This conduct, which is considered here as base and atrocious, appears to me quite natural; but this is because, in all sorts of affairs, we should understand one another, and reason with coolness.

The prude censures the coquette, and is laughed at by her in return;—this, in a few words, is your history. The man of principle judges you harshly, but you do not believe that there is a man of principle. The common people, who are always led away by virtuous demagogues, cannot be appreciated by you, who do not believe in virtue. You cannot be condemned but by your own principles, like a criminal by the laws; but those who know the refinement of your principles, find nothing in your conduct but what is very simple. This brings us back, then, to what we have already said, that, in all sorts of affairs, the first thing requisite is to understand one another, and then argue coolly. You are also protected by a sort of sub-defence, not less effectual, for you do not aspire to the reputation of a Cato or a Catinat. It is sufficient for you to resemble a certain class; and, among this certain class, it is agreed that he who may get money, and does not profit by the opportunity, is a ninny; for money procures all the pleasures of sense, and the pleasures of sense are the only pleasures. Now, M. de Choiseul, who was very liberal, made it impossible for you to resist him—particularly as your ridiculous country paid you for your services, according to her laughable custom, by the honour of serving her.

The treaty of Compiègne being concluded, M. de Chauvelin and twenty-four battalions landed on our shores. M. de Choiseul, to whom the celerity of the expedition was most important, had uneasiness on the subject, which, in his confidential communications, he could not disguise from you. You suggested that he should send you there with a few millions. As Philip took

cities with his Mule, you promised to make every thing yield to him without opposition. No sooner said than done—and there you are, recrossing the sea, throwing off the mask, and, with money and your commission in your hand, opening negotiations with those whom you thought would be most easily gained over.

Never imagining that a Corsican could prefer himself to his country, the Cabinet of Corsica had intrusted you with her interests. Never dreaming, for your part, that any man would not prefer money and himself to his country, you sold yourself and hoped to buy every body. Profound moralist as you were, you knew how much the enthusiasm of each individual was worth; some pounds of gold, more or less, formed, in your eyes, all the shades which diversify character.

You are mistaken, however:—the weak-minded were certainly shaken, but they were terrified by the horrible idea of mangling the bosom of their country. They thought they saw their fathers, their brothers, their friends, who perished in defending her, raise their heads from the tomb to load them with curses. These ridiculous prejudices were strong enough to stop you in your career; you lamented having to do with a people so childish in its notions. But, sir, this refinement of sentiment is not bestowed on the multitude; and, therefore, they live in poverty and wretchedness; while a man who has got proper notions, if circumstances favour him ever so little, knows the way to rise very speedily. This is pretty exactly the moral of your story.

When you made your report of the obstacles which prevented you from realizing your promises, you proposed that the Royal Corsican regiment should be bought. You hoped that its example would enlighten our too simple and honest peasants, and accustom them to things to which they felt so much repugnance. But what happened? Did not Rossi, Marengo, and some other madmen, inflame the minds of the regiment to such a pitch, that the officers in a body protested, by an authentic writing, that they would throw up their commissions, sooner than violate their oaths, or their duties, which were still more sacred?

You thus found yourself reduced to stand alone as an example to others. Without being disconcerted, at the head of a few friends and a French detachment, you threw yourself into Vescovato; but the terrible Clement[1] unkennelled you from thence.

[1] Clement Paoli, elder brother of the general, a good soldier, an excellent citizen, a real philosopher. At the beginning of an action he could not bring himself to engage in personal combat; he gave his orders with the *sang froid* which characterises the good officer. But

You retired upon Bastia with your companions in adventure. This little affair was not much to your credit; your house, and those of your associates, were burnt. But, in a place of safety, you laughed at these impotent efforts.

People here charge you with having endeavoured to arm the Royal Corsicans against their brethren. They also wish to impeach your courage, from the small resistance you made at Vescovato. There is little foundation for these accusations; for the first was an immediate consequence of your projects, indeed one of your means of executing them; and, as we have already proved that your conduct was perfectly simple and natural, this incidental charge goes for nothing. As to your want of courage, I do not see how this is settled by the action of Vescovato: You did not go there with the serious purpose of fighting, but for the sake of encouraging, by your example, those who were wavering in the opposite party. And after all, what right has any one to require that you should have run the risk of losing the fruits of two years' good conduct, by being shot like a common soldier? But you must have felt a good deal, say some folk, on seeing your own house, and those of your friends, become a prey to the flames. Good God! when will narrow-minded people give over trying to judge of every thing? Your letting your house be burnt, put M. de Choiseul under the necessity of indemnifying you. Experience proved the accuracy of your calculations; you received much more than the value of what you lost. To be sure you are accused of having kept all to yourself, and of having given nothing but a trifle to the poor creatures whom you had seduced. In order to justify your having acted in this way, it is only necessary to enquire if you could do it with perfect safety. Now, the poor people who were so dependent on your protection, were neither in a condition to demand restitution, nor even to understand very clearly the injustice which was done them. They could not become malecontents, and rebel against your authority; being held in detestation by their countrymen, their return to their former sentiments could no longer be held as sincere. It was

he no sooner saw his men begin to fall, than he seized his arms with a convulsive movement of indignation, and made use of them, exclaiming—"Unjust men! why break down the barriers of nature? why must you be enemies of your country?" Austere in his manners, simple in his habits, he has always lived retired. It was only in great emergencies that he came forward to give his opinion, which was very seldom departed from.

then very natural that, when a few thousand crowns thus came in your way, you should not let them out of your hands;—to have done so, would have been cheating yourself.

The French, beaten in spite of their gold, their commissions, the discipline of their numerous battalions, the activity of their squadrons, the skill of their artillerymen,—defeated at La Penta, Vescovato, Loretto, San-Nicolai, Borgo Barbaggio, Oletta,—intrenched themselves, excessively disheartened. Winter, the time of their repose, was for you, sir, a period of the greatest labour; and if you could not triumph over the obstinacy of prejudices so deeply rooted in the minds of the people, you found means to seduce some of their chiefs, whom you succeeded, though with some difficulty, in bringing to a right way of thinking. This, along with the thirty battalions whom M. de Vaux brought with him the following spring, forced Corsica to yield to the yoke, and drove Paoli and the greatest fanatics into banishment.

One portion of the patriots had died in the defence of their independence, another had fled from a land of proscription, and which, from that time, was a hideous den of tyrants. But a great number could neither die nor take flight; they became the objects of persecution. Minds, whom it had been found impossible to corrupt, were of such a stamp, that the empire of the French could only be established on their total destruction. Alas! this plan was but too punctually executed. Some perished, victims of crimes unjustly imputed to them; others, betrayed by their own hospitality, and by their own confidence, expiated on the scaffold the sighs and tears into which they had been surprised by dissimulation. A great number, crowded by Narbonne-Fridzelar into the town of Toulon, poisoned by unwholesome food, tortured by their chains, and sinking under the most barbarous treatment, lived a short time in their misery, merely to see death slowly approaching.—O God, witness of their innocence, why didst thou not become their avenger!

In the midst of this general calamity, in the midst of the groans and lamentations of this unfortunate people, you, however, began to enjoy the fruit of your labours—honours, dignities, pensions, all were showered upon you. Your prosperity would have advanced still more rapidly, had not Du Barri overthrown M. de Choiseul, and deprived you of a protector, who duly appreciated your services. This blow did not discourage you; you turned your attention to the *bureaux*; you merely felt the necessity of greater assiduity. This flattered the persons

in office, your services were so notorious. All your wishes were granted. Not content with the lake of Biguglia, you demanded a part of the lands of many communities. Why, it is said, did you wish to deprive them of these lands? I ask, in my turn, what regard ought you to have for a nation, by whom you knew yourself to be detested?

Your favourite project was, to divide the island among ten Barons. How! not satisfied with having assisted in forging the chains with which your country was bound, you wished still further to subject her to the absurd feudal government! But I commend you for having done as much harm to the Corsicans as you possibly could. You were at war with them; and, in war, to do evil for one's own advantage, is a first principle.

But let us pass over all these paltry matters—let us come to the present moment, and conclude a letter, which, from its frightful length, cannot fail to fatigue you.

The state of affairs in France prognosticated extraordinary events. You became alarmed for the effect of them in Corsica. The same madness with which we were possessed before the war, began, to your great scandal, to infect that amiable people. You comprehended the consequences; for, if noble sentiments were to gain an ascendency in public opinion, you would become no better than a traitor, instead of being a man of prudence and good sense. What was still worse, if ever noble sentiments were again to stir the blood of our ardent countrymen, and if ever a national government were to be the result of such sentiments, what would become of you? Your own conscience then began to terrify you. Restless, however, and unhappy as you were, you did not yield to your conscience. You resolved to risk every thing for every thing—but you played your game skilfully. You married, to strengthen your interest. A respectable man, who, relying on your word, had given his sister to your nephew, found himself abused. Your nephew, whose patrimony you had swallowed up in order to increase an inheritance which was to have been his own, was reduced to poverty, with a numerous family.

Having arranged your domestic affairs, you cast your eyes over the country. You saw it smoking with the blood of its martyrs, heaped with numerous victims, and, at every step, inspiring only ideas of vengeance. But you saw the ruffian soldier, the insolent pettifogger, the greedy tax-gatherer, lord it without contradiction; and the Corsican, groaning under the weight of

triple chains, neither daring to think of what he was, nor to reflect on what he still might be. You said to yourself, in the joy of your heart, "Things go on well, and the only thing is to keep them so." And straightway you leagued yourself with the soldier, the pettifogger, and the tax-gatherer. The only point now to be attended to was, to procure deputies who should be animated by congenial sentiments; for, as to yourself, you could never suppose that a nation which was your enemy would choose you for her representative. But you necessarily changed your opinion, when the letters of convocation, by an absurdity which was perhaps the result of design, determined that the deputy from the nobility should be appointed by an assembly composed of only twenty-two persons. All that was necessary was to obtain twelve votes. Your associates in the higher council laboured with activity. Threats, promises, caresses, money, all were put in action. You succeeded. Your friends were not so successful among the Commons. The first president failed; and two men of exalted ideas—the one the son, the brother, the nephew, of the most zealous defenders of the common cause—the other a person who had seen Sionville and Narbonne, and whose mind was full of the horrid actions he had seen, while he lamented his own want of power to oppose them;—these two men were proclaimed deputies, and their appointment satisfied the wishes of the nation. The secret chagrin, the suppressed rage, which were every where caused by your appointment, form the best eulogy on the skill of your manœuvres, and the influence of your league.

When you arrived at Versailles, you were a zealous Royalist. When you now arrived at Paris, you must have seen with much concern, that the government, which it was wished to organize upon so many ruins, was the same with that which, in our country, had been drowned in so much blood.

The efforts of the unprincipled were powerless; the new constitution being admired by all Europe, and having become an object of interest to every thinking being, there remained for you but one resource. This was, to make it be believed that this constitution was not adapted to our island; although it was exactly the same with that which had produced such good effects, and which it cost so much blood to deprive us of.

All the delegates of the former administration, who naturally entered into your cabal, served you with the zeal arising from personal interest. Memorials were written, the object of which was to prove how advantageous for us was the existing govern-

ment, and to demonstrate that any change would be contrary to the wish of the nation. At this time the city of Ajaccio obtained some knowledge of what was going on. This city roused herself, formed her national guard, organized her committee. This unexpected incident alarmed you—the fermentation spread in all directions. You persuaded the ministers, over whom you had gained some ascendency in relation to the affairs of Corsica, that it was of importance to send thither your father-in-law, M. Gaffory, with a command; and immediately we saw M. Gaffory, a worthy precursor of M. Narbonne, endeavouring, at the head of his troops, to maintain by force that tyranny which his late father, of glorious memory, had resisted and confounded by his genius. Innumerable blunders left no room for concealing your father-in-law's mediocrity of talent; he possessed no other art but that of making himself enemies. The people rallied against him on every side. In this imminent danger you lifted up your eyes, and saw Narbonne! Narbonne, profiting by a moment of favour, had laid the plan of establishing firmly, in an island which he had wasted with unheard-of cruelty, the despotism which oppressed it. You laid your heads together; the plan was determined on; five thousand men received orders; commissions for increasing by a battalion the provincial regiment were prepared. Narbonne set out. This poor nation, unarmed and disheartened, without hope and without resource, is delivered into the hands of her executioner.

O unhappy countrymen! Of what odious treachery were you to be the victims! You would not perceive it till it was too late. How were you, without arms, to resist ten thousand men? You would yourself have signed the act of your degradation; hope would have been extinguished; and days of uninterrupted misfortune would have succeeded. Emancipated France would have looked upon you with contempt; afflicted Italy with indignation; and Europe, astonished at this unexampled degree of degradation, would have effaced from her annals the traits which do honour to your character. But your deputies from the Commons penetrated the design, and informed you of it in time. A king, whose only wish was the happiness of his people, being well informed on the subject by M. La Fayette, that steady friend of liberty, dissipated the intrigues of a perfidious minister, who was certainly impelled by the desire of vengeance to do you injury. Ajaccio showed resolution in her address, in which was described with such energy the miserable state to which you were

reduced by the most oppressive of governments. Bastia, till then stupified as it were, awoke at the sound of danger, and took up arms with that resolution for which she has been always distinguished. Arena came from Paris to Bologne, full of those sentiments which lead men to the boldest enterprises. With arms in one hand, and the decrees of the National Assembly in the other, he made the public enemies tremble. Achilles Meurate, the conqueror of Caprana, who had carried desolation as far as Genoa, and who, to be a Turenne, wanted nothing but opportunity and a more extensive field, reminded his companions in glory, that this was the time to acquire additional fame,—that their country in danger had need, not of intrigues, which he knew nothing about, but of fire and sword. At the sound of so general an explosion, Gaffory returned to the insignificance from which he had been brought, so *mal-à-propos*, by intrigues;—he trembled in the fortress of Certe. Narbonne fled from Lyons, to hide in Rome his shame, and his infernal projects. A few days afterwards Corsica is united to France, Paoli recalled; and in an instant the prospect changes, and opens to your view a course of events which you could not have dared to hope for.

I beg your pardon, sir; I took up my pen to defend you; but my heart revolts against so uniform a system of treason and atrocity. What! did you, a son of the same country, never feel any thing for her? What! did your heart experience no emotion at the sight of the rocks, the trees, the houses, the spots which were the scenes of your infant amusements? When you came into the world, your country nourished you with her fruits; when you came to the years of reason, she placed her hopes in you; she honoured you with her confidence; she said to you, "My son, you see the wretched state to which I am reduced by the injustice of men;—through my native vigour, I am recovering a degree of strength which promises me a speedy and infallible recovery; but I am again threatened! Fly, my son, hasten to Versailles; inform the great king of every thing, dissipate his suspicions, request his friendship."

Well! a little gold made you betray her confidence; and forthwith, for a little gold, you were seen, like a parricide, tearing open her bosom. Ah, sir, I am far from wishing you ill; but there is an avenging conscience! Your countrymen, to whom you are an object of horror, will enlighten France as to your character. The wealth, the pensions, the fruits of your treasons, will be taken from you. In the decrepitude of old

age and poverty, in the frightful solitude of wickedness, you will live long enough to become a prey to the torments of conscience. The father will point you out to his son, the master to his pupil, saying, " Young people, learn to respect your country, virtue, fidelity, and humanity."

And you, respectable and unhappy woman, whose youth, beauty, and innocence were vilely prostituted, does your pure and chaste heart beat under a hand so criminal? In those moments in which nature gives the alarm to love, when, withdrawn from the chimeras of life, unmingled pleasures succeed each other with rapidity, when the mind, expanded by the fire of sentiment, enjoys only the pleasure of causing enjoyment, and feels only the pleasure of exciting feeling,—in those moments you press to your heart, you become identified with that cold and selfish man, who has never deviated from his character, and who, in the course of sixty years, has never known any thing but the care of his own interest, an instinctive love of destruction, the most infamous avarice, the base pleasures of sense! By and by, the glare of honours, the trappings of riches, will disappear; you will be loaded with general contempt. Will you seek, in the bosom of him who is the author of your woes, a consolation indispensable to your gentle and affectionate mind? Will you endeavour to find in his eyes tears to mingle with yours? Will your failing hand, placed on his bosom, seek to find an agitation like that in your own? Alas, if you surprise him in tears, they will be those of remorse; if his bosom heave, it will be with the convulsions of the wretch, who dies abhorring nature, himself, and the hand that guides him.

O Lameth! O Robespierre! O Pétion! O Volney! O Mirabeau! O Barnave! O Bailly! O La Fayette! this is the man who dares to seat himself by your side! Dropping with the blood of his brethren, stained by every sort of vice, he presents himself with confidence in the dress of a general, the reward of his crimes! He dares to call himself the representative of the nation—he who sold her—and you suffer it! He dares to raise his eyes, and listen to your discourse, and you suffer it! Is it the voice of the people that sent him? He never had more than the voice of twelve nobles. Ajaccio, Bastia, and most of the districts, have done that to his effigy which they would have been very glad to do to his person.

But you, who are induced, by the error of the moment, or perhaps temporary abuses, to oppose any fresh changes, will you tolerate a traitor? a man who, under the cool exterior of a man

of sense, conceals the avidity of a lacquey? I cannot imagine it. You will be the first to drive him away with ignominy, as soon as you are aware of the string of atrocities of which he has been the author.

I have the honour, &c.

BUONAPARTE.

From my closet at Milleli,
28d January, 1790.

No. III.

THE SUPPER OF BEAUCAIRE.

July 29, 1793.

[See p. 342.]

I HAPPENED to be at Beaucaire on the last day of the fair, and by chance had for my companions at supper two merchants from Marseilles, a citizen of Nimes, and a manufacturer from Montpellier.

After the first few minutes of mutual survey, they discovered that I came from Avignon, and was in the army. The attention of my companions, which, all the week, had been fixed on the details of that traffic which is the parent of wealth, was at this moment turned to the issue of those passing events, upon which the security of all wealth so much depends. They endeavoured to come at my opinion, in order that, by comparing it with their own, they might be enabled to form probable conjectures respecting that future, which affected us so differently. The two citizens of Marseilles, in particular, appeared to be perplexed in spirit. The evacuation of Avignon had taught them to doubt of every thing. They manifested but one great solicitude as to their future fate. Confidence soon made us talkative, and our conversation ran in nearly the following terms:—

Nimois.—Is Cartaux's army strong? It is said to have lost a great many men in the attack; but if it be true that it has been repulsed, why have the Marseillese evacuated Avignon?

Militaire.—The army was four thousand strong when it assaulted Avignon; it now amounts to six thousand, and within four days will reach ten thousand men. It lost five men killed and eleven wounded. It has never been repulsed, since it never made a formal attack: the troops only manœuvred about the place, in order to ascertain where an attempt to force the gates, by means of petards, might be made to the best advantage; a few cannon were fired, to try the courage of the garrison, and it was then necessary to draw back to the camp, to combine the attack for the following night. The Marseillese were three thousand six hundred men; they had a heavier and more numerous artillery, and yet they have been obliged to recross the Durance. This surprises you; but it is only veteran troops who can endure the uncertain events of a siege. We were masters of the Rhone, of Villeneuve, and of the open country; we had intercepted all their communications. They were under the necessity of evacuating the town, were pursued by our cavalry, and lost many prisoners, with two guns.

Marseillese.—This is a very different story from what we have been told. I do not dispute what you say, since you were present; but you must confess that, after all this, they can do you no good. Our army is at Aix. Three good generals are come in place of the former ones: at Marseilles they are raising fresh battalions; we have a new train of artillery, several twenty-four pounders; in a few days, we shall be in a position to retake Avignon, or at worst we shall remain masters of the Durance.

Militaire.—Such is the story you have been told, to entice you to the brink of the abyss, which is deepening every moment, and which perhaps will engulf the finest town of France—the one which has deserved most of the patriots. But you were also told, that you should traverse France—that you should give the *ton* to the Republic—and yet your very first steps have been checks. You were told that Avignon could resist for a long time a force of twenty thousand men—and yet a single column, without a battering train, gained possession of it in four-and-twenty hours. You were told that the south had risen—and you found yourselves *alone!* You were told that the Nimes cavalry were about to crush the Allobroges—and yet the Allobroges were already at Saint-Esprit, and at Villeneuve. You were told that four thousand Lyonese were marching to your assistance—and yet the Lyonese were negotiating an accommodation for themselves.

Acknowledge, then, that you have been deceived—open your eyes to the want of skill among your leaders, and put no faith in their calculations. Of all counsellors, self-love is the most dangerous. You are naturally impetuous: they are leading you to your destruction, by the self-same means which have ruined so many nations—by inflaming your vanity. You possess considerable wealth, and a large population—these they exaggerate. You have rendered signal services to the cause of liberty—of these they remind you, without, at the same time, pointing out to you, that the genius of the republic was at that time with you, that it has now abandoned you.

Your army, you say, is at Aix with a large train of artillery, and skilful generals; well, do what it may, I tell you it will be beaten. You had three thousand six hundred men—a full half is dispersed. Marseilles, and a few refugees from the department, may offer you four thousand: that is the utmost. You will then have between five and six thousand troops, without unity, without order, without discipline.

You have, you say, good generals. I do not know them, and shall not, therefore, dispute their abilities; but they will be absorbed in details, they will not be seconded by the subalterns, they will be unable to do any thing to maintain the reputation they may possess; for it would require at least two months to get their army into tolerable discipline; and in four days Cartaux will have passed the Durance—and with what soldiers! Why, with the excellent light troop of the Allobroges, the old regiment of Burgundy, and the brave battalion of the Cote d'Or, (which has been a hundred times victorious in battle,) and six or seven other corps, all disciplined soldiers, encouraged by their successes on the frontiers, and *against your army!* You have some twenty-four pounders, and eighteen pounders, and you fancy yourselves impregnable. In this you but follow the vulgar opinion; but military men will tell you, and fatal experience is about to convince you, that good four-pounders and eight-pounders are preferable on many accounts to pieces of heavy calibre! You have cannoneers of the new levy—your adversaries have gunners from regiments of the line, the best masters of their art in all Europe!

What will your army do if it concentrates itself at Aix? It is lost. It is an axiom in the military art, that the army which remains in its intrenchments is beaten: experience and theory agree upon this point; and the walls of Aix are not equal to the worst field-intrenchment, especially if you bear in mind their

extent, and the houses which skirt them on the exterior within pistol-shot. Be you well assured then that this course, which to you appears the best, is the very worst. Besides, what means will you possess of supplying the town, in so short a time, with every kind of provisions? Will your army offer battle? Why, it is the weaker in numbers—it has no cavalry—its artillery is less adapted for the field—it would be broken, and from that moment defeated without resource, for the cavalry would prevent it from rallying.

Expect, then, to see the war carried into the Marseilles territory. There a tolerably powerful party is for the Republic; this will be the moment for the struggle; the junction will be made; and your city, the centre of the commerce of the Levant, the *entrepôt* of the south of Europe, is lost! Recollect the recent example of Lisle,[1] and the barbarous laws of war.

What infatuation has all at once possessed your townsmen? What fatal blindness is leading them to their ruin? How can they fancy themselves powerful enough to oppose the whole Republic? Even should they compel this army to fall back upon Avignon, can they doubt that, in a few days, fresh troops would come to supply the place of the former? The Republic, which gives the law to Europe, will she receive it from Marseilles?

United with Bordeaux, Lyons, Montpellier, Nimes, Grenoble, the Jura, the Eure, the Calvados, you undertook a revolution. You had a probability of success: those who spurred you on might be ill-intentioned men; but you were an imposing mass of strength. On the contrary, now that Lyons, Nimes, Montpellier, Bordeaux, the Jura, the Eure, Grenoble, Caen, have accepted the constitution; — now that Avignon, Tarascon, Arles, have submitted, acknowledge that in obstinacy there is folly. The fact is, that you are under the influence of individuals who, *having no property of their own to look after*, are involving you in their ruin.

Your army will be composed of the best conditioned, the richest portion of your city; for the Sans-Culottes could but be too easily turned against you. You are about, then, to risk the *élite* of your youthful population, young men accustomed to hold the commercial balance of the Mediterranean, and enrich you by their economy and their speculations, against veteran soldiers a

[1] A small town in the department of Vaucluse, four leagues east of Avignon, having resisted Cartaux's army, was carried by assault, 26th July, 1793.

hundred times stained with the blood of the desperate aristocrat or the ferocious Prussian.

Let poor countries fight to the last extremity. The inhabitant of the Vivarais, of the Cevennes, of Corsica, exposes himself without fear to the issue of a battle; if he gains it, he has obtained his object; if he is beaten, he finds himself as before, in the condition to make peace, and in the same position. But you!—lose but a battle, and the fruits of a thousand years of industry, of economy, of prosperity, become the prey of the soldier.

Marseillese.—You get on at a great rate, and you alarm me. I agree with you that our situation is critical. It is perhaps true, that we do not sufficiently consider the position in which we now stand; but you cannot but acknowledge that we have still immense resources to oppose you. You have persuaded me that we could not resist at Aix: your observation as to the want of subsistence is perhaps unanswerable, as applied to a siege of long duration; but do you imagine that all Provence can, for a long period, witness with indifference the blockade of Aix? It will rise spontaneously; and your army, hemmed in on all sides, will be but too happy to repass the Durance.

Militaire.—Ah! how little you know of the spirit of men, and of the times, to talk thus! Every where there are two parties. The moment you are besieged, the Sectionary party will be put down in all the country places. The example of Tarascon, Saint-Remy, Orgon, Arles, should convince you of this; a score of dragoons have sufficed to restore the old authorities, and put the new ones to flight.

Henceforward, in your department, any powerful movement in your favour is impossible. It might have taken place when the army was on the other side the Durance, and you were unbroken. At Toulon, the active spirits are much divided; and there the Sectionaries have not the same superiority as at Marseilles; they must therefore remain in the city to keep down their adversary. As for the department of the Lower Alps, nearly the whole of it, as you know, has accepted the constitution.

Marseillese.—We shall attack Cartaux in our mountains, where his cavalry will be of no service to him

Militaire.—As if an army engaged in protecting a town could choose the point of attack. Besides, it is a fallacy to sup-

pose there are any mountains near Marseilles sufficiently inaccessible to render cavalry ineffective: your hills are just steep enough to render the use of artillery more difficult, and to give a great advantage to your enemy; for it is in a country intersected by rivers that the skilful artilleryman, by the rapidity of his movements, the exactness in serving his pieces, and the accuracy of his elevations, is the most sure of having the superiority.

Marseillese.—You fancy us, then, to be without resources: Is it then possible, that it can be the destiny of a town who resisted the Romans, and preserved a portion of its laws under the despots who succeeded them, to become the prey of a handful of brigands? What! the Allobroge, laden with the spoils of Lisle, shall he give law to Marseilles? What! Dubois du Crancé, and Albitte, shall they rule over us uncontrolled? Those men, steeped in blood, whom the miseries of the times have placed at the head of affairs, shall they be our absolute masters? Sad, indeed, is the prospect you set before us! Our property, under different pretences, would be invaded; at every instant we should be the victims of a soldiery, whom plunder unites under the same banner: our best citizens would be imprisoned, and perish by violence. The Club would again rear its monstrous head to execute its infernal projects! Nothing can be worse than this; better to expose ourselves to the chance of warfare, than become victims without alternative!

Militaire.—Such is civil war! men revile one another—detest one another—kill one another, without knowing one another! The Allobroges! what do you suppose them to be? Africans? inhabitants of Siberia? Oh, not at all! They are your countrymen,—the men of Provence, of Dauphiny, of Savoy. Some people fancy them to be barbarians, because the name they have taken sounds oddly. If your own troops were to be called the Phocæan phalanx, every species of fable would be accredited respecting them.

You have reminded me of one fact, the assault of Lisle. I do not justify it, but will explain to you how it happened. The inhabitants killed the trumpeter who was sent to them; they resisted without the slightest chance of success; the town was taken by assault; the soldiers entered it amidst fire and slaughter: it was impossible to restrain them, and fury did the rest.

Those soldiers whom you call brigands, are our best troops, and most disciplined battalions: their reputation is above calumny.

Dubois-Crancé and Albitte, constant friends of the people, have never deviated from the right line. Certainly they are "wicked men" in the eyes of the bad: but Condorcet, Brissot, Barbaroux, were also "wicked men," so long as they remained uncontaminated. It will ever be the fate of the good to be ill-spoken of by the worthless. You imagine they shew you no mercy; on the contrary, they are treating you like wayward children. Do you think, if they had been otherwise disposed, that the merchants of Marseilles would have been suffered to withdraw the goods which they had at Beaucaire? They could have sequestered them till the war was over. They were unwilling to do so; and, thanks to them, you can now return quietly to your homes.

You call Cartaux an assassin. Well! let me tell you, that that general takes the greatest pains to preserve order and discipline; witness his conduct at St Esprit and at Avignon. He ordered a sergeant to prison because he had violated the asylum of a citizen who concealed one of your soldiers. In the eyes of the general, this sergeant was culpable for having entered, without direct orders, a private dwelling. Some people of Avignon were punished for pointing out a house as belonging to an aristocrat. A prosecution is now going on against a soldier, on a charge of theft. On the contrary, your army killed, assassinated more than thirty persons, violated the asylums of families, and filled the prisons with citizens, on the vague pretence that they were brigands.

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Marseillese.—Ah! your army! It has greatly degenerated from the army of 1789. That army would not take up arms against the nation. Yours should imitate so worthy an example, and not turn their arms against their fellow-citizens.

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Militaire.—I well know that the people of Marseilles differ widely from those of La Vendée as to the subject of counter-revolution. The people of La Vendée are robust and healthy: the people of Marseilles weak and sickly. They stand in need of honey, to induce them to swallow the pill: to establish among them the new doctrine, they must be deceived. But after four years of revolution, after so many plots, and counterplots, and conspiracies, all the perversity of human nature has been developed under all its different aspects, and bad men have perfected their subtlety. You have, you say, the tri-coloured flag? Paoli also hoisted it in Corsica to have time to deceive the people, to crush the true friends of liberty, to entice his countrymen to join him in his ambitious and criminal projects; he hoisted the tri-coloured flag, and he nevertheless fired upon the vessels of the Republic, and drove our troops from the fortresses; he disarmed all the detachments he could surprise; he collected forces to drive the garrison from the island; he plundered the magazines, selling at a low price every thing found within them, to secure money to carry on his revolt; he confiscated the property of the wealthiest families, because they were attached to the unity of the Republic; he got himself appointed generalissimo; and he declared all those who should continue in our armies enemies of their country. Before this, he had caused the failure of the expedition to Sardinia; and yet he had the shamelessness to call himself the friend of France and a good Republican; and he deceived the Convention still, after all. He acted, in short, in such a way, that when at length he was unmasked by his own letters found at Calvi,—it was too late,—the fleets of our enemies intercepted all intercourse with the island.

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you: you have been misled—it is no new thing for the people to be so—by a few conspirators and intriguers. In all ages, the flexibility and ignorance of the multitude have been the causes of most civil wars.

Marseillese.—Ah! sir, who is to bring the good about? Can it be the refugees who arrive on all sides from the department? They are interested in acting with desperation. Can it be those who at this moment govern us? Are not they in the same situation? Can it be the people? One portion of them knows nothing of its real position; it is blinded and *fanaticized:* the other portion is disarmed, suspected, humbled. I see, therefore, with deep affliction, miseries without remedy.

Militaire.—At last you are brought to reason. Why should not a like change be effected in the minds of a large portion of your fellow-citizens, who are deluded and sincere? In that case, Albitte, who can have no other wish than to spare French blood, will send you some honest and able man; matters will be arranged; and without a moment's delay, the army will march under the walls of Perpignan, to make the Spaniard dance the Carmagnole; and Marseilles will continue to be the centre of gravity to liberty. The only thing necessary will be to tear a few leaves out of its history.

This happy prognostic put us all in excellent humour. The citizen of Marseilles, with great readiness, treated us to some bottles of champagne, which dispelled all our doubts and anxieties. We retired to rest at two in the morning, having agreed to meet again at breakfast; where my new acquaintance had still many doubts to suggest, and I many interesting truths to impart.

July 29, 1793.

END OF VOLUME NINTH.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO., PAUL'S WORK.

hundred times stained with the blood of the desperate aristocrat or the ferocious Prussian.

Let poor countries fight to the last extremity. The inhabitant of the Vivarais, of the Cevennes, of Corsica, exposes himself without fear to the issue of a battle; if he gains it, he has obtained his object; if he is beaten, he finds himself as before, in the condition to make peace, and in the same position. But you!—lose but a battle, and the fruits of a thousand years of industry, of economy, of prosperity, become the prey of the soldier.

Marseillese.—You get on at a great rate, and you alarm me. I agree with you that our situation is critical. It is perhaps true, that we do not sufficiently consider the position in which we now stand; but you cannot but acknowledge that we have still immense resources to oppose you. You have persuaded me that we could not resist at Aix: your observation as to the want of subsistence is perhaps unanswerable, as applied to a siege of long duration; but do you imagine that all Provence can, for a long period, witness with indifference the blockade of Aix? It will rise spontaneously; and your army, hemmed in on all sides, will be but too happy to repass the Durance.

Militaire.—Ah! how little you know of the spirit of men, and of the times, to talk thus! Every where there are two parties. The moment you are besieged, the Sectionary party will be put down in all the country places. The example of Tarascon, Saint-Remy, Orgon, Arles, should convince you of this; a score of dragoons have sufficed to restore the old authorities, and put the new ones to flight.

Henceforward, in your department, any powerful movement in your favour is impossible. It might have taken place when the army was on the other side the Durance, and you were unbroken. At Toulon, the active spirits are much divided; and there the Sectionaries have not the same superiority as at Marseilles; they must therefore remain in the city to keep down their adversary. As for the department of the Lower Alps, nearly the whole of it, as you know, has accepted the constitution.

Marseillese.—We shall attack Cartaux in our mountains, where his cavalry will be of no service to him

Militaire.—As if an army engaged in protecting a town could choose the point of attack. Besides, it is a fallacy to sup-

pose there are any mountains near Marseilles sufficiently inaccessible to render cavalry ineffective: your hills are just steep enough to render the use of artillery more difficult, and to give a great advantage to your enemy; for it is in a country intersected by rivers that the skilful artilleryman, by the rapidity of his movements, the exactness in serving his pieces, and the accuracy of his elevations, is the most sure of having the superiority.

Marseillese.—You fancy us, then, to be without resources: Is it then possible, that it can be the destiny of a town who resisted the Romans, and preserved a portion of its laws under the despots who succeeded them, to become the prey of a handful of brigands? What! the Allobroge, laden with the spoils of Lisle, shall he give law to Marseilles? What! Dubois du Crancé, and Albitte, shall they rule over us uncontrolled? Those men, steeped in blood, whom the miseries of the times have placed at the head of affairs, shall they be our absolute masters? Sad, indeed, is the prospect you set before us! Our property, under different pretences, would be invaded; at every instant we should be the victims of a soldiery, whom plunder unites under the same banner: our best citizens would be imprisoned, and perish by violence. The Club would again rear its monstrous head to execute its infernal projects! Nothing can be worse than this; better to expose ourselves to the chance of warfare, than become victims without alternative!

Militaire.—Such is civil war! men revile one another—detest one another—kill one another, without knowing one another! The Allobroges! what do you suppose them to be? Africans? inhabitants of Siberia? Oh, not at all! They are your countrymen,—the men of Provence, of Dauphiny, of Savoy. Some people fancy them to be barbarians, because the name they have taken sounds oddly. If your own troops were to be called the Phocæan phalanx, every species of fable would be accredited respecting them.

You have reminded me of one fact, the assault of Lisle. I do not justify it, but will explain to you how it happened. The inhabitants killed the trumpeter who was sent to them; they resisted without the slightest chance of success; the town was taken by assault; the soldiers entered it amidst fire and slaughter: it was impossible to restrain them, and fury did the rest.

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